

BISMARCK -- THE DISHONEST BROKER?

by

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PREFACE

From June 13 until July 13, an international gathering of the leading statesmen of Europe met at the Congress of Berlin to decide the fate of the Treaty of San Stefano signed between Russia and Turkey to conclude the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. At this Congress, Otto von Bismarck reached the height of his political career. Representing a powerful Germany that he had helped to construct, he presided as President of one of the three great Congresses of the Nineteenth Century.

Bismarck professed that he entered the Congress as the "Honest Broker" and would serve as umpire between the great powers of Europe. He stated openly that Germany had nothing to gain, and no interests to serve in the Eastern Question. But was this Bismarck's true role? Did he actually act as the representative of a disinterested umpire for the powers? This study is an attempt to discover Bismarck's true role and guiding motives in the diplomatic negotiations preceding the Congress of Berlin, and in the actual meeting itself.

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CHAPTER I

BISMARCK'S SEARCH FOR PEACE

Prussian victories, first over Denmark, then over Austria and finally over France, overturned the balance of power as it had previously existed in Europe. The great powers, long content to contain the ambitions of Napoleon III or block the expansionist policies of the Czar, now had to readjust their foreign policies to meet the new situation created by the eclipse of France, and the reorganization of Central Europe under German leadership.

The architect of this transitional period was Otto von Bismarck, the "Iron Chancellor of Germany." He had led Prussia from its position of inferiority to Austria within the German Confederation, into the position of leadership that climaxed in the formation of the German Empire. Prophecyng that "not by speeches and majorities will the great questions of the day be decided--that was the mistake of 1848 and 1849--but by iron and blood," Bismarck helped to strengthen the Prussian army, diplomatically isolated his foes and crushed them by war.¹ "Iron and Blood" was a hard, brutal policy but it produced the results he was after--a mighty empire carved out of a group of loosely bound German states.

This man who, after the Treaty of Frankfort in 1871, became the most powerful statesman in Continental Europe, was born April 1, 1815 at Schönhausen, Brandenburg. As son of one of the prominent Junker families that constituted the governing class of Prussia, Bismarck was provided

¹Emil Ludwig, Bismarck, the Story of a Fighter. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1927), p. 207.

with an adequate education, but spent an unproductive youth. After a brief military career which he hated, Bismarck and an older brother took over the family estates. Bored with this life, Bismarck soon earned the nickname of the "mad Junker" for his wild escapades.² Later, he tried to become a civil servant but soon retired with the explanation, "I have never been able to put up with superiors."³

Bismarck's career began in 1847 when he received the distinction of being a substitute member to the United Diet called by Frederick William IV.⁴ Here he won the King's approval for his reactionary attitude. This recognition launched Bismarck on his road to fame.

Throughout his career, Bismarck was a staunch foe of Republicanism. He felt sure Prussia could reach greatness only through a strong monarchy. During those critical years of German history, he must be described as a reactionary. When the Revolution of 1848 reached Germany, Bismarck's first thought was to rescue the King with the aid of his faithful peasants.⁵ When his efforts came to nothing he protested against the Revolution by adopting the word "Von," the symbol of the German aristocracy, to his name.⁶

However, the Revolution gave Bismarck his great opportunity. After fighting had broken out in Berlin, King William IV recalled the United Parliament.

²Grant C. Robertson, Bismarck. (London: Constable & Co., 1919), p. 103.

³As quoted in: Alan John Percivale Taylor, Bismarck, the Story of a Fighter. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1927), p. 207.

⁴Frederick Darmstaedter, Bismarck and the Creation of the Second Reich. (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 36 Essex Street, Strand, W. C. 2., 1948), p. 11.

⁵Ibid., p. 78.

⁶Robertson, Bismarck. p. 63.

Bismarck was elected representative to the Lower House by a 152 to 144 margin. His campaign slogans had been, "Fight the Revolution," and "Re-establish the old bond of trust between the Crown and the People."⁷ Throughout the meetings, he fought for the monarchy and thoroughly denounced the Revolution.

During this time, the King developed the following opinion of Bismarck: "red reactionary, smells of blood, only to be used when the bayonet rules."⁸ At this crucial period in German history, Bismarck served in the Constituent Assembly, the National Assembly at Berlin, and the Union Parliament at Erfurt. He spoke often, and always in uncompromising resistance to the liberal program of the revolutionaries.⁹

Although the reactionary Junker did not serve in the Frankfort National Assembly in which Frederick William IV refused the crown for a Constitutional Monarchy, he nonetheless gained even more influence in the Prussian Court. Upon hearing the news that the King had rejected the crown, Bismarck let it be known that he was happy with the King's decision.¹⁰

Bismarck now entered the political arena as a professional politician with his appointment as delegate to the restored Federal Diet at Frankfort.¹¹ Here he strongly advocated Prussia's interests and effectively countered Austrian policies, an approach that gained him even more support from Frederick William IV. By the time the Crimean War broke out, Bismarck was

⁷ Darmstaedter, Bismarck. p. 84.

⁸ As quoted in: Robertson, Bismarck. p. 62.

⁹ Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁰ Taylor, Bismarck. p. 28.

¹¹ Darmstaedter, Bismarck. p. 106.

strong enough to exert important influence upon the King. He urged that Prussia adopt a policy of strict isolation. He said: "I should be alarmed if we sought protection from the approaching storm by tying our neat seaworthy frigate to Austria's worm-eaten old battleship."¹² When Frederick William IV signed a three year defensive alliance with Austria, Bismarck was in high agitation.¹³ He felt that this period provided Prussia with an opportunity to gain leadership among the German states. The pact with Austria would only postpone the decision.

Just as Bismarck was enjoying great influence in Berlin, Frederick William IV became insane. He was followed by William I. The new King regarded Bismarck as a wild reactionary and, in Bismarck's own words, "put him on ice," by declaring him Prussian ambassador at St. Petersburg, January 29, 1859.¹⁴

This was a blow to Bismarck. At Berlin he could smoke Havana cigars from morning until night, drink Black Velvet--a mixture of stout and champagne he invented--and retire to his family estates for periods of relaxation. At St. Petersburg he was isolated. The small salary he received did not let him entertain as others did.¹⁵ Yet, because of his haughty manners and free spirit, he became a great favorite at the Russian Court. Bismarck put this time to valuable use by becoming a personal friend of the Czar, and he was able to get along well with Gorchakov, Russian

¹²As quoted in: Robertson, Bismarck. p. 91.

¹³Taylor, Bismarck. p. 39.

¹⁴Darmstaedter, Bismarck. p. 106.

¹⁵John Lord, Beacon Lights of History. Vol. X: European Leaders. (New York: James Clark & Co., 1891), p. 300.

Foreign Minister. By this friendship, he created a credit upon which he could later draw. ¹⁶

In January 1861, the King came into conflict with the Prussian Chamber over reform of the army. A deadlock resulted which reached such serious proportions that William I threatened to resign. ¹⁷ Bismarck, closely watched these events from his position in St. Petersburg. In July 1861, he drafted the Baden Memorial to King William I. In this document Bismarck urged the King to put Prussia at the head of the unitary movement and lay before the Federal Diet, a proposal to create a National Parliament, chosen by direct suffrage from all Germany. He assumed the existence of a strong Prussian army and the will to employ it at the right moment in imposing a Prussian solution on all points of conflict. ¹⁸ The King refused to adopt Bismarck's principles but he regarded them favorably. This can be seen by the fact that Bismarck's isolation in St. Petersburg ended by his appointment as Prussian Ambassador at Paris, May 29, 1862. ¹⁹

As the deadlock between the King and the Prussian Chamber continued, the King summoned Bismarck from Paris to Berlin for an interview. On the morning of September 22, 1862 Bismarck met with the King. Here he persuaded William I to tear up the abdication notice he had drafted, put himself unreservedly at his sovereign's disposal, and declared his readiness to fight to the last for the rights of the Crown and the royal scheme of

¹⁶ Robertson, Bismarck. p. 103.

¹⁷ Darmstaedter, Bismarck. p. 184.

¹⁸ Robertson, Bismarck. p. 112.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 113.

reorganization of the army.²⁰ William I agreed that Bismarck was the man who could break the deadlock and immediately appointed the "mad Junker"²¹ as President Minister of Prussia.

The question might now be asked, what kind of a man was Bismarck? First, he held a firm belief in the feudalistic right of royalty to rule their subjects. He was determined to support to the utmost the power of the Crown. He accepted the principle of constitutional government but only as a power in the hands of the monarch to restrain popular agitation and maintain order.²² His central aim and constant thought was the ascendancy of Prussia, and later, the German Empire.

Bismarck could be described as anything but a social gentleman. He ate only once a day but did so in such large quantities that it would do five men. He could drink a quart of beer or wine without taking the cup from his mouth, and he smoked incessantly, using either cigars or a long Turkish pipe. His manners were brusque and rough. This coupled with his enormous physical size made him feared more than he was honored. He was well read in history, but not in art, science or poetry. Outside of music, he cared little for the arts.²³ Bismarck's first love was foreign affairs. He said, "Foreign affairs are, for me, an end in themselves, more important than anything else in the world."²⁴

²⁰Ibid., p. 112.

²¹Darmstaedter, Bismarck. p. 194.

²²Lord, Beacon Lights. p. 274.

²³Ibid., p. 277.

²⁴As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 507.

This interest is reflected in the years from 1862 until 1871. During this period Bismarck's policy of iron and blood, resulted in wars with Denmark, Austria and France. In each, Prussia was successful. The end result of Bismarck's labors were realized with the Treaty of Frankfort, May 10, 1871.²⁵ Here, a united Germany became a reality.

In 1871 the Iron Chancellor was fifty six years of age. Though somewhat fatigued by his labors he was at the height of his extraordinary powers.²⁶ Since the days of the first Napoleon no man had been so feared and admired. Even his enemies did not venture to question his genius. His dominant personality, his gift of a use of caustic expressions, the apparent reckless frankness, the very brutality of his utterances, fascinated and subjugated those with whom he came into contact.

He was infinitely resourceful in detail, keeping open various possibilities and seemed always ready to change on the instant, if need be, from one course of action to another. He was never off his guard, and was constantly pumping and bewildering his opponents.²⁷

The year 1871 marks a turning point in Bismarck's career. His philosophy changed from "blood and iron" to one of peaceful security for Germany. Prior to 1871 it had been necessary to win power for Germany, in order to effect unification. After 1871, it was not his object to add to the fabric he had erected. He confined himself to strengthening it and

²⁵Taylor, Bismarck. p. 39.

²⁶Archibald Cary Coolidge, The Origins of the Triple Alliance. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 27.

²⁷Ibid., p. 27

putting it in a position to weather future storms. He strove to consolidate the new empire and to make its inhabitants feel its advantages, to win over the discontented elements, to stimulate its economic development and to keep up its military strength at the highest point of efficiency.²⁸ This became the guiding motive throughout the remaining nineteen years of his reign.

In the accomplishment of this task, Bismarck's past proved to be a burden. In Europe as well as in Germany, his every move was eyed with suspicion and distrust. As instigator of three wars in which Prussia had been victorious, it was feared by many that he might renew his desire for conquest at further expense to European states. After all, was not his definition of an opportunist, "A man who uses the most favorable opportunity to carry through what he regards as useful and appropriate."²⁹ Lord Odo Russell, English ambassador at Berlin, said of Bismarck: "Napoleon III was not more powerful than Bismarck is at this moment."³⁰

Bismarck's problem was how could he get Europe to dispel the distrust that surrounded him, and could he get Europe to realize his policy was pacific militarism and not aggressive militarism. He had succeeded in effecting the political unity of Germany without calling into existence a hostile coalition, but in 1871, in light of Germany's successes, would he be able to prevent the other continental states from uniting out of fear or

²⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

²⁹ As quoted in: Taylor, Bismarck. p. 158.

³⁰ As quoted in: Alfred Francis Pribam, England and the International Policy of the European Great Powers, 1871-1914. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), p. 9.

jealousy of German strength? In his memoirs, Bismarck expressed this concern:

It is our interest to keep the peace, whereas our continental neighbours cherish wishes (some of them secret and some of them officially acknowledged) which can only be fulfilled by means of war ...our development into a great power has aroused fears which we must try to dispel by the honorable and pacific use of our influence ...respect for the rights of other states...is made easy for the German Empire, on the one hand, by the objectivity of the German character, and, on the other, by the fact that we do not need any enlargement of territory, and could not achieve such an enlargement without strengthening the centrifugal elements in our domain. My ideal has always been that, after establishing unity within the frontiers attainable by us, we should win the confidence...of the great powers; that German policy, after the injuria temporum, the disintegration of our nation, has been made good, should be peaceful and just...when contemplating international disputes which can only be settled by war. I have never been inclined to regard them by the standard which prevails at a student's duel. 31

In order to solve these problems, Bismarck based his hopes on four principles. First, Germany must keep strong militarily, she must isolate France from any possible coalition and thirdly, the isolation of France must be accomplished through a system of alliances with the powers of Europe so that a new war would not find Germany isolated. The fourth step in Bismarck's policy was that after he had succeeded in the isolation of France, he must use his position and influence to prevent any crises that might result in a European war. It is with this fourth principle that this paper will be primarily concerned. However, it will be necessary to discuss the first three principles to see how they were accomplished.

Prussia had been a military state, and after German unification was complete, Bismarck was certain that this military power must be maintained.

31 As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 508.

Therefore, in dealing with the Reichstag, on one point he would not budge--reduction of the army. He fought to maintain it to the utmost extent the nation could bear.³² This military might became the essential backbone of Bismarck's policy. Had he represented a small or a weak state he could have been constrained to rely on foreign aid to carry out his plans. But as things were, Bismarck could speak with the authority of the strongest army in the world to back his words.³³ He was not concerned with using it for future conquests as some thought, but as an imperative necessity to guard the empire. These views are expressed clearly in a speech delivered before the Reichstag in 1888:

We must be as strong as we can in these days. We have the capability of being stronger than any other nation of equal population in the world, and it would be a crime if we did not use this capability. We must still make greater exertions than other powers for the same ends on account of our geographical position we lie in the midst of Europe. We have at least three sides open to attack. God has placed on one side of us the French--a most warlike and restless nation, and he has allowed the fighting tendencies of Russia to become great; so we are forced into measures which perhaps we would not otherwise make; and the very strength for which we strive shows that we are inclined for peace; for with such a powerful machine as we wish to make the German army; no one would undertake to attack us--we Germans fear God but nothing else in the world and it is the fear of God which causes us to love and cherish peace.³⁴

To dominate European diplomacy as he felt he had to do for the sake of Germany, Bismarck had to have an army whose threatened use could decide an issue and prevent war. Therefore, the army was one of Bismarck's prime concerns.

³²Lord, Beacon Lights. p. 309.

³³Ibid., p. 309.

³⁴Louis L. Snyder, Documents of German History. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1958), p. 11.

The second step in Bismarck's policy was the isolation of France. In 1871, France was in a chaotic state. Her prestige was shattered and her army and finances were those of a vanquished nation. She was compelled to play a secondary role and to submit to the organization of Europe with or without her. It appeared as though the former empire would be a threat to no one. Even in this state, Bismarck feared France. With her he asked nothing better than to live in peace, but on the basis of her past performances he feared her hostility, especially since the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and her former predominance in European affairs. He felt that France would continually be on the watch for an opportunity to obtain revenge by rebuilding her fallen fortunes at Germany's expense.³⁵ Of France alone he had no fear, but the possibility of France constructing a coalition of powers hostile to the German Empire constituted a veritable nightmare. He had to isolate France, or at least insure that she with her allies would be kept weaker than Germany with her allies, and consequently she would never contemplate aggressive moves against Germany.³⁶ This statement made by Bismarck stresses this point:

It is necessary for us that we should be left in peace by France. If France will not keep the peace with us, we must prevent her finding allies. So long as she has no allies, France is not dangerous to us; and so long as the great monarchies of Europe hold together, no republic is dangerous to them. On the other hand, a French Republic will find it very difficult to secure a monarchical ally against us.³⁷

The cornerstone of his policy was to keep Germany out of war and to prevent all wars in which she might become involved. To do this he had to

³⁵ Robertson, Bismarck. p. 330.

³⁶ Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 40.

³⁷ As quoted in Ludwig; Bismarck. p. 507.

isolate France just as he did in the days prior to the Franco-Prussian war.

At this time Bismarck evaluated the nations of Europe for a possible alliance or coalition against France. One by one, each nation was weighed by the shrewd Chancellor to see if an alliance with them would be to the best interests of Germany.

Italy was considered as a possible ally. In fact, Bismarck hoped to bring her into an alliance after she became stronger.³⁸ He felt an alliance between Germany and the Italian government would be easy to conclude because Germany was mostly Protestant and would halt the Pope's attempt to regain his land. However, at this time Bismarck did not feel that Italy could offer sufficient military aid in return for the risk Germany might have to assume by supporting her. As a result, Italy was by-passed for the time being.

Spain, on the Southern border of France, geographically, offered Germany a potential valuable ally. After a closer examination however, the golden age of Spain had ended long ago. Spain in 1871 was torn by civil war caused by an extremely feeble government. She was almost negligible in Europe. An alliance with Spain would accomplish little.

Another possibility examined by Bismarck, was an alliance with England. In 1871, Lord Salisbury said:

Imperial England and satiated Germany could be very good friends, on the sole grounds that you love those most whom you compete with least. Germany was afraid of French and Russian ambitions in Europe; England was afraid of French and Russian ambitions in the world outside of Europe. Germany is clearly cut out to be our ally--for the present.³⁹

³⁸A. J. Butler, Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman, Being the Reflections and Reminiscences of Otto, Prince von Bismarck. 2 vols. (New York & London: Harper & Brothers, 1893), II, 245.

³⁹Raymond J. Sontag, Germany and England. (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), p. 94.

However, in 1871, British public opinion was still directed against Germany. Their attitudes were much the same as they had been after Königgrätz, the crushing bombardment of Paris, and the fall of France. At this time they referred to Bismarck as, "The bold and bad with his idiot King in his pocket."⁴⁰ Punch had expressed England's resentment best with the statement, "A new minister to Prussia has not been found. We have hanged almost everybody fit to be sent there."⁴¹ This period had influenced the sale of The Battle of Dorking, a description of an imaginary German invasion of England, which caused a great deal of excitement in England and even resulted in the British strengthening their army.⁴² As a result, in 1871, Britain would be described as anti-German. Perhaps the main reason for all of the hostility was that Germany had made great gains by "Iron and Blood" while at this same time Liberalism in England was at its brightest point. Thus there was a natural conflict of ideologies that made Conservative Germany an enemy of Liberal England.

Bismarck, on the other hand was aware of the advantages of an alliance with England. The whale of the sea and the elephant of the continent should be natural allies. However, he was sure that as long as Gladstone was Prime Minister and Liberalism was the dominant philosophy, England's policy would be anti-Prussian.⁴³ Besides, she was too much interested in her commerce, and in her colonial affairs, and too unreliable, because of

⁴⁰As quoted in: Sontag, Germany and England. p. 94.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 94.

⁴²Ibid., p. 82.

⁴³Pribram, England and International Policy. p. 8.

her democratic influences, to be counted upon.⁴⁴ Therefore, in 1871, Bismarck turned his back on Liberal England. France was England's colonial rival so he need not be concerned about an Anglo-French alliance.

The survey of the nations of Europe narrowed the field down to two nations, Austria-Hungary and Russia. If France was to find an ally that would endanger Germany it would be either Austria-Hungary or Russia. Bismarck lived in constant horror of a Russian, French and Austrian alliance.⁴⁵ In his memoirs Bismarck said:

A renewal of a coalition between Austria, Russia and France might be confronted without despair by a United Germany which conducted her campaigns with skill; nevertheless, it would be a very serious combination, the formation of which it must be the aim of our foreign policy to prevent.⁴⁶

He felt that England would undoubtedly join this alliance thus rendering Germany isolated on the continent of Europe. In 1879, Count Peter Schuvalov, Russian ambassador at Berlin, asked him, "You have the nightmare of coalitions?" Bismarck answered, "Yes, necessarily."⁴⁷ Then in a letter written to his son Herbert in the Autumn of 1877, Bismarck told him:

A French newspaper recently said of me that I had 'le cauchemar des coalitions.' German ministers of state will for a long time to come, and perhaps for always, have good reason to suffer from this nightmare. The Western powers can easily form coalitions against us with the accession of Austria; but perhaps even more dangerous would be a coalition between Austria, Russia and France.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 34.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 38.

⁴⁶ Butler, Bismarck. p. 272.

⁴⁷ As quoted in: Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 38.

⁴⁸ As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 505.

This fear is pointed out by the following statement made by Bismarck in his later years:

We had waged victorious wars against two of Europe's great powers; everything depended upon inducing at least one of the two whom we had beaten in the field to renounce the anticipated design of uniting with each other in a war of revenge...this situation demanded an effort to limit the range of a possible anti-German coalition by means of treaty arrangement, placing our relations with at least one of the powers on a firm footing. The choice could be only between Austria and Russia. ⁴⁹

Action was first taken for an alliance of this type in 1870. When Bismarck was at Meaux, he had gone through the process of sounding out the Austrians and Russians for their attitude toward such an alliance. Working earnestly and with much haste he was able to arrange a meeting of the Emperors of Germany, Russia and Austria in September, 1872. At this meeting a union referred to as the Dreikaiserbund (Three Emperor's League) was discussed. Although no written agreement was signed, the three Emperors came to a close understanding. ⁵⁰ Finally on April 24, 1873, Emperor William I, Bismarck and Moltke visited St. Petersburg and signed a secret military agreement whereby each would support the other with 200,000 men in case of attack by a third power. ⁵¹ Later in May Czar Alexander II visited Schönbrunn Austria. Here, in a meeting with Franz Joseph I, an agreement was signed which completed the organization of the Dreikaiserbund. In essence, this agreement provided that the three conservative monarchs united for peaceful aims, were willing to endeavor to adjust their eventual conflicting interests and in case of danger from without would strive to

⁴⁹ Butler, Bismarck. p. 251.

⁵⁰ Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 48.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 51.

come to an agreement with each other before seeking allies elsewhere. Bismarck felt that he had reached the solution to his problem. So long as the Dreikaiserbund continued, peace was assured. The military power of these three monarchies was so great that against them in conjunction, the other European states were helpless.

The question might now be asked, how did Bismarck succeed in accomplishing this alliance? How was he able to get Austria, a power that had been beaten by Germany, to agree to an alliance? How was he able to get Austria and Russia, both jealous of each others motives in the Balkans, to agree to cooperate with each other? To answer these questions one must take a closer look at the diplomacy behind the scenes. This action will reveal the underlying factors that enabled this alliance to take form.

As early as 1866, Bismarck had thought that someday a German-Austrian alliance might be necessary. It is for this reason that as moderate a treaty as possible was submitted to Austria, after the Austrian-Prussian War. Bismarck refused to annex territory even against the will of King William and public opinion. As a result, soon after the fall of Sedan, Austria lost most of her feelings for revenge. Secretly, she desired a rapprochement with Germany in order to prevent the growth of a hostile Russo-German understanding, made possible after the fall of France. This was further evident when Count Julius Andrassy, the Germanophile and friend of reconciliation was selected as Prime Minister.⁵² Andrassy desired the alliance in order to acquire closer relations with Germany. He desired to

⁵² Count Julius Andrassy, Bismarck, Andrassy and their Successors. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), p. 16.

carry out reforms in the Balkans which would insure the existence of the Ottoman Empire or if this failed, to form Christian states independent of the Czar. In order to do this he had to have Germany in his camp.

After the Russians and Germans had signed their part of the treaty in 1873, it was offered to Andrassy too. However, he refused it because:

This treaty would have bound us to the side of Russia even if on account of their conflicting ambitions in the East, the Czar should be attacked by England and Turkey; also to defend Alsace-Lorraine against the French, in short, to jeopardize our existence in the interests of others. ⁵³

The original terms were completely unacceptable to Andrassy. Because of his insistence he was able to sign the alliance without taking on the obligation to defend the other two. This was considered as a diplomatic victory for Andrassy over the great Bismarck. Perhaps it was, but Bismarck was satisfied with the price he had to pay for his alliance.

On the other hand, Russia was easier to deal with. Immediately upon hearing the rumor of a possible Austrian-German rapprochement during the Emperor Franz Joseph's visit to the Emperor William I at Berlin, August 1871, the Czar offered a written treaty of alliance to Germany. ⁵⁴ Bismarck immediately accepted. The Dreikaiserbund was now complete. The ease by which this treaty was completed was a result of the strong ties that had existed between Prussia and Russia. The Hohenzollerns and the Romanoff families were very close. Both were anti-Polish; and Prussia and Russia had fought side by side against Napoleon. Bismarck also was on good terms with Russia. It is certain that Bismarck received Russia's benevolent

⁵³ As quoted in: Andrassy, Bismarck, Andrassy and their Successors. p. 17.

⁵⁴ Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 47.

neutrality in 1870 by inviting Russia to denounce the prohibitive clauses in a revision of the Treaty of 1856.⁵⁵ This incident increased Russian good will and kept England and Austria busy while Prussia finished with France. Bismarck had made many friends while serving as an ambassador to St. Petersburg, and he stood aloof while Russia crushed the Poles in 1863. All of these factors plus Russian fear of isolation enabled Germany and Russia to easily agree on the Dreikaiserbund.

After the formation of the Alliance had taken place, Bismarck planned on three principles that would work to hold the powers together. First, each of the three powers were anti-Polish. Each had gained from the Three Partitions of Poland in the Eighteenth Century, and none of them desired the creation of a new Poland. Bismarck could use this desire to keep the powers working together for that purpose. Secondly, Bismarck felt that the battle against Liberalism would tend to hold the three Conservative Monarchs together.⁵⁶ The Emperors regarded the "Revolution" as blasphemy. Bismarck encouraged this idea because monarchial solidarity tended to draw Russia and Austria toward Germany, and away from France.⁵⁷ Thirdly, Bismarck felt that with the signed alliance he had a valuable tool with which to tighten Russian-Austrian relations. They had agreed to talk things over before seeking alliances with other powers, therefore, through the League, any disagreement could be solved peaceably and if either of the powers talked of war Bismarck could threaten to use the German army against

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

⁵⁶ Sorley, Germany and England. p. 137.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 137.

them.

With the signing of the Dreikaiserbund in 1873 Bismarck's goals were complete. The army made Germany the supreme land power in Europe. It was strong and through Bismarck's guidance its strength was to be preserved. France, the hereditary foe was defeated and through the Dreikaiserbund and England's indifference, was isolated. Germany was allied to Austria and Russia. Collectively, they made a force so formidable that no power dared attack them.

An ordinary statesman would have been content with this situation and would have had little reason to worry. However, Bismarck could not assume this position. Even after the signing of the Dreikaiserbund, he was continually searching and scheming for some new way to strengthen the alliance. He worried for fear that some small incident would develop into a European war. He worried for fear that some small incident would develop so that Austria and Russia would renounce their alliance obligation and side with France in a coalition leaving Germany isolated and helpless. In fact, by 1875 he had worried himself so much and had been under such a mental strain that he was forced to retreat to Varzin, his North Prussian estate, in order to rebuild his strength. The events of 1875 were to prove that these fears were not entirely without foundation.

CHAPTER II

WAR SCARE OF 1875

After five years of relative quiet in foreign affairs, during which Bismarck was able to initiate many of his internal reforms, the spotlight shifted once again to international affairs. Two incidents occurred in 1875 that caused not only Bismarck but the rest of Europe as well, a great deal of anxiety lest the peace be broken. The first of these was the War Scare of 1875. The second; the outbreak of revolt in the Balkans. To the Iron Chancellor, both of these events, at first glance, seemed like minor incidents, but careful examination told him that both of them posed a serious threat to his policy of isolating France, and more important, the maintenance of the Dreikaiserbund. These two events were tests for his system, and taxed his influence and capabilities to the fullest.

The War Scare of 1875 was a diplomatic episode to which perhaps more importance has been attached than really belongs to it. It has still not been completely cleared up.¹ Its origin goes back to the end of the Franco-Prussian War. France at this time was a defeated nation, wracked by internal disorder and a huge war indemnity. Yet, this disastrous eclipse that had befallen France in 1870-71 had been followed by a recovery which filled both friend and foe with admiration and surprise. Not merely had Thiers' effort to pay this indemnity and ensure evacuation been completely successful, but the French army was steadily reorganized and national

¹E. T. S. Dugdale, German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914. (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd. 1928), p. xiv.

prosperity was again apparent.²

While this was being accomplished, during the years 1873-1874, there had been a noticeable deterioration in the relations between France and Germany. This was largely due to the effect on Catholic opinion in all countries of the open conflict between the German government and the Roman church, generally known as the Kulturkampf.³ The French Bishops, especially the Bishop of Nancy, had published certain pastoral letters which caused indignation and anxiety.⁴ The Belgian church had also joined in the chorus of protests denouncing the actions of Bismarck. This situation was further intensified when Marshal MacMahon became President of France. He was pro-Catholic and held the support of the Royalist party. Furthermore, the Duc Decazes, a nervous, ambitious diplomat was awarded the post of Foreign Minister. As a result of these actions, Bismarck definitely feared that France under MacMahon might aim at a coalition with Catholic Austria, hostile to Germany.⁵ Bismarck's position in this matter is clear in the years prior to 1875. Regarding France as a nation still suffering from defeat, and diplomatically isolated from the rest of the nations of Europe, he felt that through some well placed threats, France could be persuaded from attempting to enlarge her army or disembark on a policy that would place her in a coalition against Germany. As a result, he attempted to

²R. W. Seton Watson, Britain in Europe, 1789-1914. (Cambridge: University Press, 1955), p. 508.

³Dugdale, German Documents. p. 2.

⁴Henri George Stephan Adolphe Opper Blowitz, Memoirs of M. de Blowitz. (New York: Doubleday Page & Co., 1903), p. 101.

⁵Dugdale, German Documents. p. 1.

save Thiers by dire threats of the effect his fall would have on Germany. Repeatedly he threatened that, if convinced of French aggressive designs, Germany would attack. Against his Kulturkampf he demanded the French government silence Bishops who preached against it and he spoke ambiguously of influential elements in Germany who wished a preventive war.⁶ These attitudes are clearly shown in the following statements made by Bismarck. First, in a letter to Count Arним, German ambassador to Paris, dated October 30, 1873, Bismarck wrote:

No government would be so foolish if, contrary to its wishes, war had to be considered unavoidable, as to leave its opponents the choice of time and opportunity, and to await the moment which would require a clear political horizon, and even before the war of 1870, often gave expression to the view that the outbreak of a war would be less harmful to it than constant threat of war.⁷

And again in January 1874, in a letter to Arnim, he wrote: "If French policy makes itself subservient to the hostile endeavours of the Roman Curia, we should consider ourselves as threatened, and have to consider methods of defense."⁸

In April, 1875, in answer to attacks made by Belgian church officials on his Kulturkampf, Bismarck told the government of Belgium that:

While it was incumbent upon every state not to allow its territory to be a basis of attack against the peace of neighboring states and against the security of their subjects, the doctrine applied with special force to a state enjoying the privilege of neutrality, that the perfect fulfillment of that duty was a tactically preserved

⁶Sontag, England & Germany. p. 143.

⁷Dugdale, German Documents. p. 2. Prince Bismarck to Count von Arnim, Paris. October 30, 1873.

⁸Ibid., p. 2. Prince Bismarck to Count von Arnim, Paris. October 30, 1873.

condition of its neutrality.⁹

Undoubtedly, Bismarck felt that in France's isolated condition, these threats would have a great deal of effect upon her future policy. He reasoned that England and Russia would not interfere because of religious reasons. Both of these countries were Protestant and if anything, they would support his policy by remaining aloof to the whole situation.¹⁰ Although Austria was Catholic, she too would not protest because of the importance of the Dreikaiserbund to her security.¹¹ With this situation, Bismarck hoped to influence French policy by threatening her away from aggressive moves. However, as events happened, this policy threatened to get out of hand. The nations of Europe, especially England and Russia felt that he was endeavouring to force a quarrel upon his recent victim before her recovery was complete, in order to crush her once and for all.¹² Therefore, instead of successfully bullying France Bismarck wound up the victim of his own plan, suspected and temporarily isolated in Europe.

In the beginning of 1875, the situation took a more acute form; alarm was raised at the progress of the reforms in the French army. By the Cadres Law of 1875, a new "fourth battalion" was created. Under this law, units intended to come into existence in the event of war, maintained a permanent cadre on active duty. It was designed to prevent the disorganized

⁹ Windfred Taffs, "The War Scare of 1875." The Slavonic and East European Review. No. 335 (London: Eyre and Spotteswoode, Ltd., 1931), p. 632.

¹⁰ Sontag, England & Germany. p. 142.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 142

¹² Dugdale, German Documents. p. 2.

conditions of the French reserves that hampered the army during the Franco-Prussian War.¹³ Furthermore, an order was placed in Germany by the French government for 10,000 cavalry horses.¹⁴ Bismarck viewed the situation as serious and immediately prohibited the export of horses to France. The German view of this situation is expressed clearly in a letter dated April 11, 1875 from Count Bülow, the Secretary of State to Count Münster, German Ambassador in London:

.....There can be no doubt that the French government plans for putting the army into condition for striking extend far beyond the needs of a peaceful policy and the material strength of the country. This fact is the best explanation for the assumption by the foreign press that Germany is seeking to renew its struggle with France.¹⁵

As soon as the "fourth battalion" was decided upon, the military party in Germany betrayed much agitation of which Count Moltke was the first to give the signal. Speaking of "a savage cry for revenge from beyond the Vosges," he urged the need for a preventive war against France.¹⁶ Army officers and newsmen talked of nothing but preventive war over their beer mugs, and men in society gravely nodded their heads and said a preventive war was the height of political wisdom.¹⁷ The entire situation was brought to a head by a series of newspaper articles which made war seem almost inevitable. The first of these appeared in a German newspaper, Kölnische Zeitung. A letter dated Vienna, April 5, 1875 and headed "New

¹³Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 3. Count von Bülow, Foreign Minister, to Count Münster, Paris, April 11, 1875.

¹⁶Robertson, Bismarck. p. 336. As quoted in: Seton Watson, Britain in Europe. p. 508.

¹⁷Sontag, England & Germany. p. 144.

Alliances," argued that from the recent great increases in military preparation and in particular the Cadres Law, and from the effort to establish a clerical monarchy and a Catholic League against a Prussianised Germany, inferred a direct preparation for a "War of Revenge."¹⁸ Immediately following this article, on April 9, 1875 an article appeared in the Berlin Post entitled "Ist Der Krieg in Sicht?" (Is War in Sight?) For a long time it was believed to have been written by Bismarck but later evidence confirmed that it was written independently by Constantine Rössler, editor of the Post.¹⁹ It considered that the danger of a war of revenge was imminent. It quoted, in support, Marshal MacMahon's demand to extend his Presidentship for a period of at least ten years, as indicating a desire to direct in person the war of revenge, as head of state.²⁰ Tension was further increased when on May 6, 1875 an article written by M. de Blowitz, entitled, "A Fresh Scare," appeared in the Paris Times. This article gave an account of a planned German invasion of France. According to the article, the German armies were to invade France, crush all opposition instantly, press on to Paris, invest the capitol, and take up positions on the plateau of Amron, whence they could overlook Paris, and if need be destroy it. This done, Germany would dictate a treaty reducing France to absolute subjection for many years. It would insist on a permanently reduced army, impose a war indemnity of 10,000,000,000 (Ten milliards)

¹⁸Dugdale, German Documents. p. 3.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 3. In a speech to the Reichstag on February 9, 1876, Bismarck discussed the article in the Post: "To my knowledge, I have never had an article written for this paper and certainly not headed Krieg in Sicht. But, I have never found fault with it."

²⁰Ibid., p. 5.

of Francs, payable in twenty annuities without any clause allowing payment to be made in advance, with an annual interest rate at five per cent, and keep garrisons in the principle towns of France until the whole sum would be paid.²¹ Bismarck was also blamed as the sponsor of this article but the author, M. de Blowitz maintained that he received his material from the Duc Decazes. In the words of Blowitz:

After swearing I would never reveal the source till after the death of Decazes, he produced a dispatch from the Viconte de Gontaut-Biron, French Ambassador in Berlin. It was a detailed account of an interview with M. de Radowitz, whom he had met at a ball:

Radowitz revealed to him the plans conceived against France by the German Military Party. Such an indiscretion on his part, unless it was committed by order, would have drawn serious punishment. But who could possibly have ordered these indiscretions?...It was Prince Bismarck...From his political point of view, that is, of the attitude of England and Russia--such an enterprise might turn out to be most disastrous for Germany...Prince Bismarck, therefore, thought that the best way to cut short a project of which he himself was no longer the master was to reveal it to official Europe and let the force of public opinion take its course.²²

After this article, the French government turned for support to Russia and England. General Leflo was dispatched to St. Petersburg to discuss the situation, and Lord Lyons, British Ambassador to Paris, was briefed on the situation. The French were successful. Leflo returned to France with the Czar's guarantee of peace and Lord Lyons reported to his government that France could not fight a war for ten years. She was only building up her army for respect in the world.²³

As a result, there was a concentrated effort from all quarters to

²¹Blowitz, Memoirs. p. 112.

²²Ibid., p. 112.

²³Dugdale, German Documents. p. 4.

restrain Bismarck.²⁴ On May 10, 1875, the Czar of Russia and his Chancellor, Prince Gorchakov, were in Berlin, on the way to an annual cure at Ems, and they threw their whole influence with the Emperor in favor of peace, while Lord Odo Russell, British Ambassador to Berlin, received instructions to intervene along similar lines.²⁵ Queen Victoria wrote a letter to the Emperor William in which she stressed her friendship toward him, her attachment to Germany, and urged upon him a policy of magnanimity and generosity towards France.²⁶

On May 10, 1875 informal conferences were held at the Wilhelmstrasse first with Lord Odo Russell of England and later with Prince Gorchakov of Russia. At these conferences Bismarck stressed the peaceful intentions of Germany. The results are expressed clearly in a cypher telegram from Lord Odo Russell to Lord Derby: "Berlin, May 11, 1875—I have had a most satisfactory interview with Prince Gorchakov and Prince Bismarck. They are both agreed that the peace of Europe shall not be disturbed, and co-operate for the maintenance of peace."²⁷

Gorchakov received the most recognition out of the conference and was credited with placing a public slight upon the German Chancellor in his own

²⁴ Seton Watson, Britain in Europe. p. 509.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 509.

²⁶ George Earle Buckle, The Letters of Queen Victoria. 6 vols., 1870-1878. (London: John Murray, Albermarle Street w, 1926), II, 313. Queen Victoria to Emperor William. Osborne, February 10, 1875.

²⁷ Taffs, The War Scare of 1875. p. 641. Cypher telegram from Lord Odo Russell to Lord Derby, Berlin, May 11, 1875.

capitol by announcing that "now peace is assured."²⁸ After the conference took place all rumors of war ceased. Europe returned to normal. There was one lasting result however, and that was resentment on the part of Bismarck towards Gorchakov. Said the Iron Chancellor:

I reproached Gorchakov sharply. It was not I said, a friendly part suddenly and unexpectedly to jump on the back of a trustful and unsuspecting friend, and get up a circus performance at his cost; proceedings of this kind between us, who were the directing ministers, could only injure the two monarchies and states. If he was anxious to be applauded in Paris, he need not on that account injure our relations with Russia. I was quite ready to assist him...we might also set up a theater in the German embassy, where he could appear before a French audience with the same inscription in the character of a guardian angel, dressed in white with wings, to the accompaniment of Bengal fire.²⁹

The resentment with which Bismarck regarded his former teacher because of his vain role as peacemaker in 1875, led to a deterioration in their relations; and it in part explains the reason for Bismarck's choice of supporting Austria instead of Russia before and at the Congress of Berlin.³⁰ The Iron Chancellor was not the man to forget a bad turn and still less a humiliation as he had received from Gorchakov in his own capitol.³¹

The question that must now be raised is did Bismarck actually have intentions of war against France in 1875? Did he actually desire such a preventive war as he was accused of in the early months of 1875? Bismarck emphatically denied that he had any intention of attacking France. In his

²⁸As quoted in: William Flavelle Monypenny and George Earle Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli. 4 vols. (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1929, II, 763).

²⁹Butler, Bismarck. p. 191.

³⁰Anna Augusta Whittall Ramsay, Idealism and Foreign Policy. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1925), p. 379.

³¹Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 63.

memoirs he states:

So far was I from entertaining any such idea at the time, or afterwards, that I would rather have resigned than lent a hand in picking a quarrel, which could have had no other motive than preventing France from recovering her breath and strength. A war of this kind could not, in my opinion, have led to permanently, tenable conditions in Europe, but might have brought about an agreement between Russia, Austria and England based upon mistrust of us, and leading eventually to active proceedings against the new and unconsolidated empire. ³²

Bismarck placed the blame for the war scare on Moltke and the military factor in Germany, the alarmists articles that appeared in the French and German press, and the Duc Decazes. He made a scapegoat of Moltke by stating that, "Moltke took a military and strategic view of the question and did not consider the political side of it; his opinions were purely based on a mathematical calculation, irrespective of other considerations." ³³ Bismarck emphatically denied all connection with the articles that appeared in the press. Rather, Bismarck said that Decazes was responsible for much of the scare because of his engagement in large speculation on the Bourse. ³⁴

However, despite Bismarck's statements, the fact remains that in the years before the crises of 1875 he had used threats against France based partly upon fear of French military reorganizations and partly upon French and Belgium protests against the Kulturkampf. It was also known that the possibilities of a preventive war against France were real. The question is was the greater danger from Bismarck or the German military party? ³⁵

³² Butler, Bismarck. p. 193.

³³ As quoted in: Lord Augustus Loftus, The Diplomatic Reminiscence of Lord Augustus Loftus. 6 vols. (London, Paris & Melbourne, 1894), VI, 134.

³⁴ Seton Watson, Britain in Europe. p. 510.

³⁵ Monypenny and Buckle, Disraeli. II, p. 763.

A letter written by Admiral Albrecht Stosch to his friend Freytag on April 22, 1875 reveals considerable insight into this situation:

I was astonished to find a martial mood here when I returned after three weeks absence. I lay no weight at all on the sensational article and motives. I believe that the Chancellor had only the intention of showing France we were not afraid and the Belgians that talk of the devil makes him appear. However, here danger is seen everywhere. There is no appreciation of such a calm standpoint. Bismarck was sick, and I could not get any certain information. Then yesterday, the Chancellor gathered us (the State Ministry) together at a session. His cold was apparent, but he was unusually active in spirit and in good mood. I can tell you that we will remain at peace. ³⁶

This meeting was held two days after publication of the Post article, "Ist der Krieg in Sicht?" Here Bismarck assured his cabinet that there must be no war. This event took place before pressure was brought to bear on Bismarck from England and Russia. The indication that can be drawn here is that Bismarck, in the Spring of 1875, had no intentions of attacking France but there were many in Germany who felt that this would be the desirable policy.

Count Suburov, the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, also throws new light on the subject. He said in his memoirs: "It was not against France but against the military of the two countries that he bore a grudge. If one let them do as they liked, the charge of these burning questions were so that he had determined to bring them within the area of diplomatic explanation." ³⁷

Baron Holstein also defends Bismarck in this situation. He made the following statement in his memoirs:

I am fully convinced that Prince Bismarck had no thought what-

³⁶Frederick B. Hollyday, Bismarck's Rival. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1960), p. 117. Letter from Admiral von Stosch to Freytag, April 22, 1875.

³⁷As quoted in: Taffs, The War Scare of 1875. p. 643.

ever of going to war. Not only are there no definite signs of such an intent, but later on, in every case when war really did seem possible, Prince Bismarck showed a most zealous love of peace. He used to say, "You know where war begins but you never know how or where it ends." ³⁸

The conclusion that may be drawn from this incident is that Bismarck saw in the rearmament of France a new potential threat to the peace the German Empire needed. A strong France might break away from the anchor of isolationism and under Marshal MacMahon and Decazes, lead a Catholic coalition against Protestant Germany. Therefore, while the opportunity existed, he had to attempt to prevent France from becoming too aggressive. This could be done by threats of a preventive war. In this incident, Bismarck's fear of a hostile coalition prompted his actions. However, in 1875, when sabres began to rattle and France appealed to world opinion, Bismarck had to abandon his threatening attitude, and accept the humility of negotiations with Lord Odo Russell and Prince Gorchakov. As a result of this policy Bismarck became the object of suspicion and distrust in the courts of Europe. However, peace was maintained, the Dreikaiserbund still intact, and although France did not have to worry about a "German preventive War," neither did Bismarck have to worry about a French war of revenge, or a French-led coalition against Germany.

³⁸Norman Rich and M. H. Fisher, (ed), The Holstein Papers. The Memoirs, Diaries and Correspondence of Friedrich von Holstein, 3 vols. (Cambridge: University Press), "Memoirs & Political Observations." II, 117.

CHAPTER III

CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The War Scare of 1875 had hardly subsided when a revolt occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Soon, Montenegro, Serbia and Bulgaria had taken up the sword against their Turkish masters. The intervention of Russia, followed by the Russo-Turkish War and the Treaty of San Stefano, brought Europe within measurable distance of a European conflagration. This situation soon proved to be as critical to the Bismarckian system as the Greek insurrection had been to Metternich's Holy Alliance in 1822-1830.¹ The crisis not only posed a threat to European peace but also threatened Austrian and Russian collaboration in the area, endangering the Dreikaiserbund--the heart of Bismarck's European diplomacy. At his country estate at Varzin, Bismarck, satisfied that Germany had escaped a hostile coalition as a result of the War Scare, now anxiously watched events in the Balkans. True, Germany at this time had no interests in the East, but an Austrian, Russian clash over this area could harmfully weaken the Dreikaiserbund, and divide the continent into two hostile camps.

The Ottoman Empire held large tracts of Asia and Africa as well as Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was feared by European leaders of every degree. The flood of Ottoman conquests had twice carried the Turks to the gates of Vienna, but since the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, the Turkish dominion in Europe had been restricted to the Balkan Peninsula.²

¹Robertson, Bismarck. p. 338.

²Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 877.

While the Turks were still a conquering race, the empire was well governed, taxation was light, and the subject races had little cause for complaint. But the Turkish conquests were never thoroughly consolidated. Turks, Slavs and Greeks dwelt together side by side but were never fused into one nation.³ Accordingly, when the heritage of Solyman the Magnificent passed in 1566 to a series of incompetent successors, there was a rapid decay.⁴

Until 1875, most of the Balkan Peninsula from the Adriatic Sea and from the Mediterranean to the Southern frontiers of Austria and Russia, with the exception of Greece, was under the direct control of the Sultan, or of a vassal status. Greece still looked forward to the time when Thessaly and Epirus would become Greecian territory. Serbia and Montenegro had been Principalities since 1830, and Roumania since 1861, but they were still vassal states. The Sultan directly controlled Bulgaria, Roumelia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Albania, Thessaly, Epirus, Thrace and Macedonia.⁵

Within the centrally governed provinces, there existed great diversity both of race and religion. Those of Moslem faith escaped oppression, but systematically oppressed their neighbors. Christians were deprived of liberties and rights of citizenship, equality before the law was unknown, small peasant holdings were discouraged by the land-laws, and taxation was everywhere arbitrary, exorbitant and ruthlessly enforced. Promises of

³Ibid., p. 877.

⁴Ibid., p. 878.

⁵Sir A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy. 4 vols., 1783-1919. (Cambridge: University Press, 1923), III, 91.

reform became exasperating in their multiplicity and insincerity.⁶ Corruption and inefficiency at the center of government produced corruption and oppression throughout the provinces. Misgovernment rekindled the national spirit of the oppressed peoples, and insurrection and revolts, often successful, were the inevitable outcome.⁷

Since 1856, and the signing of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Crimean War, Turkey had enjoyed unusual calm. Unhappily, the charter of 1856, which called for reforms not only in Turkey itself but in the Turkish provinces as well, had remained on paper. Outside of army reforms and central government reconstitution, there had been no reforms. Instead, the cancer of inefficiency had eaten deeper into the body politik.⁸ Turkey was headed by Abdul Aziz, a cruel and grossly incompetent tyrant. The statesmen of real caliber whom Turkey had possessed in the 1850's had been replaced by medeocrites. On top of this fact, Turkish finances had gone from bad to worse. After a series of nine foreign loans between 1854 and 1875, bankruptcy was imminent.⁹

For four centuries, Bosnia-Herzegovina had formed a little world of its own, isolated from the main Balkan trade routes, ruled by a small group of Moslemised feudal Bega, deeply divided in religion between Orthodox, Catholic and Moslem, and in the nineteenth century, racked by periodical revolt. The year 1874 was marked by a crop failure in Herzegovina, but

⁶Ibid., p. 91.

⁷Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 877.

⁸Seton Watson, Britain in Europe. p. 512.

⁹Ibid., p. 512.

taxes were as oppressive as ever. In this year, the Emperor of Austria made a visit to Dalmatia. Excited by the Emperor's visit, and incensed at tax oppression, the civilians of a small town in Herzegovina rose in rebellion, July 1875. All efforts of the Turks to suppress it failed. The Sultan appealed to the powers as a bankrupt, and declared his inability to pay his debt or the interest on them.¹⁰ The powers intervened in the interest of peace, but still the Herzegovians fought on. They refused to lay down their arms until assured of reforms.

During the Spring of 1876, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Bulgaria joined in the revolt. On May 2, the smoldering embers burst into flame and the Bulgarians, encouraged by the success in Herzegovina, and assisted by Roumelia, rose in rebellion.¹¹ To suppress this uprising, as insisted upon by the powers and to make reprisals for the murder of the local Turkish officials, the Sultan let loose upon the inhabitants an ill-disciplined army of half-civilized Bashi Bazouks.¹² It was in the mountainous district around Philipopolis, in the country afterwards known as Eastern Rumelia, that the uprising had first occurred, and it was here that the massacres and outrages that had marked the insurrection were avenged a hundredfold. Thousands perished and many villages were ravaged and destroyed. Peculiarly heinous atrocities were perpetrated in the hill town of Batak; every house

¹⁰Ibid., p. 512.

¹¹Lord L. L. D. Acton, Cambridge Modern History. 14 vols. The Latest Age. (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1910), XII, 123.

¹²Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 95. Bashi Bazouks were soldiers gathered from the wildest districts of Turkey and the lowest haunts of the cities of the Turkish Empire.

in it was burnt, and 5,000 people slaughtered, neither age nor sex being spared. ¹³

Four days after the revolt in Bulgaria, a mob of fanatical Turks murdered the French and German Consuls at Salonica. This event, coupled with the previous revolt and atrocities, led the powers to believe that the Porte had lost complete control in the matter. It was here that the Berlin Memorandum was drawn up for a two months armistice in which the belligerents should attempt to arrive at an understanding, and further reforms, most of which were outlined by the Andrassy note. ¹⁴ The memorandum was telegraphed to the powers for approval on May 13, 1876, and an immediate reply was urged. ¹⁵ Italy and France acquiesced but England declined. England's refusal to join the powers led the Porte to believe England favored him. As a result he refused to accept the demands made by the powers in the Berlin Memorandum.

As a result of his refusal to accept negotiations, Serbia and Montenegro declared war on July 1 and 2. ¹⁶ The Porte, after having crushed the Bulgarians, was now free to face the Serbs with the majority of his force. At this time, thousands of Russian volunteers flocked to the Serbian standards, and the supreme command was assigned to the Russian General Chernagev. Despite this assistance, Serbia's offensive soon failed. In

¹³Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 913.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 913.

¹⁵Great Britain, British and Foreign State Papers. Vol. LXVII, (London: William Ridgway, 169 Piccadilly, 1885), p. 1234. Letter from the Earl of Derby to Lord Odo Russell in reply to Berlin Memorandum, May 19, 1876.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 1235. Letter from Odo Russell to the Earl of Derby, July 3, 1876.

the first week of August, the Turks captured Knjazevac and Zejcar, and advancing steadily, inflicted a severe defeat on the Serbs on September 1, 1876 at the Battle of Alekaivac.¹⁷ Overwhelmed and exhausted, Prince Milan appealed for intervention by the powers. Finally, on November 1, 1876, Russia by means of a threat, secured a two months armistice for Serbia and Montenegro. It was later extended to March 1, 1877. Before the armistice expired, Serbia made peace with Turkey on the basis of the status quo, February 28, 1877.¹⁸

Montenegro had been more successful in the war than had Serbia. They had managed to inflict some serious losses on the Turks. During the armistice, peace negotiations were carried on with the Porte. However, these proved fruitless because the victorious Montenegrans asked cession of territory.

After the failure of the Constantinople Conference, held December 21, 1876, the London Protocol was proposed. It urged the Porte to list the reforms that he expected to carry out. The powers would then determine if they were satisfactory, observe their progress through their diplomatic representatives, and if disappointed, consider common measures for enforcing them.¹⁹ The Porte immediately rejected this plan and Russia declared war.²⁰

¹⁷ R. W. Seton Watson, "Russo British Relations During the Eastern Crises." The Slavonic and East European Review. Vol. IV, No. 10. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Ltd., 1925), p. 177.

¹⁸ British State Papers. p. 810. Note by British Foreign Office.

¹⁹ Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 390.

²⁰ Benedict Humphrey Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, 1870-1880. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), p. 271.

The rejection of the Protocol of London was, according to Russian ideas, a defiance of a unanimous Europe by the Porte.²¹ In a circular of April 19, 1877, Prince Gorchakov announced to Europe that the Czar had given orders for his armies to cross the frontiers of Turkey.²² Russia would intervene alone, in the interest of Europe, and force upon Turkey the terms of peace that the European concert had failed to do.²³ Immediately preparations were made for another military campaign, but not until April 29, 1877, five days after Russia declared war on Turkey, did hostilities reopen.²⁴

Prior to this action, Russia realized that the key to her action in the Balkans depended upon an agreement with the Hapsburg Empire. Experience during the Crimean War had shown that the Austrian army could threaten Russian land communications and make it dangerous for her to engage in operations in Roumania or on the Danube. With this in mind, Alexander II and Franz Joseph met at the Castle of Reichstadt, and concluded an agreement which would be a guiding principle in the advent of a break-up of Turkey. According to the agreement, Bulgaria, Rumelia and Albania would be erected into autonomous or independent states, and under no conditions was a large Slavic state to be created. Serbia and Montenegro were to be allowed a common frontier in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, Bosnia and Herzegovina were to be annexed by Austria, and Russia was to be allowed to regain the

²¹ Ibid., p. 270.

²² British State Papers. Vol. LXVIII, p. 841. Russian circular of April 19, 1877 to the Foreign Offices of Europe.

²³ A full text of the London Protocol may be seen in Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. Appendix IV, p. 605-613.

²⁴ Acton, Modern History. XII, p. 388.

Bessarabian territory, that she had lost in 1856, which would bring her frontiers to the Danube.²⁵ This agreement was signed July 8, 1876. The terms of the agreement were later incorporated into the Treaty of Budapest, January 15, 1877. It is interesting to note, that in return for Austrian neutrality, Russia promised to confine her activities to the Eastern half of the Balkan Peninsula, and recognized the interests of Austria in the Western half.²⁶ On Russia's insistence the treaty was kept secret because it was inconsistent with Russia's claim to be liberator of the oppressed Slav people. Their trust in her sincerity would be shattered if they knew she had transferred Slav people from one captivity to another.²⁷

On April 24, 1877 the Russian army was ordered to cross the Turkish frontier. The Grand Duke Nicholas issued these words to sustain their morale: "We are called upon to execute the will of the sovereign and the sacred legacy of our fathers. It is not towards conquest that we march, it is to defend our insulted and oppressed brothers, to defend the faith of Christ."²⁸ Was it to be a crusade? The soldiers so considered it. On the other hand, the Czar had told the Grand Duke that Constantinople was his object.²⁹ Thus the Russians had two ideas in entering the war.

Contrary to expectations, the Russian armies failed to "promenade"

²⁵ Charles Jelavich, Tsarist Russia & Balkan Nationalism. (Berkeley & Los Angles: University of California Press, 1958), p. 4.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁷ Acton, Modern History. p. 389.

²⁸ As quoted in: Gabriel Hanotaux, Contemporary France. trans. E. Sparvel Bayly. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 291.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 291. Onou, The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatyev. p. 115.

through the Balkans. Roumania joined Russia on June 3, and at the same time, declared her independence from Turkey.³⁰ Montenegro had declared war on April 29. With these allies Russia did, during the first two months, seem to have an easy path to Constantinople. However, when Osman Pasha assumed command of the Turkish forces, the Turkish army halted the rush. At Plevna, the Turks held out until December 10.³¹ At this time the Turkish resistance collapsed and the Porte began peace negotiations with Russia.

England became alarmed at this time at the fact that even though negotiations were underway, the Russian army was advancing towards Constantinople. On January 3, she ordered her fleet to the Dardanelles, but on January 24, word was received from Constantinople that an understanding had been reached between the belligerents and that the question of the Straits should be settled between the Congress and the Emperor of Russia. The Cabinet, thinking that now the Russians would halt, countermanded the order.³² Still, the Russian army continued to advance. The Russo-Balkan War threatened to break out into a new, larger conflict. An intense war spirit arose in England and the signing if the Armistice on January 31, 1878 between the belligerents did not reduce the war fever.³³

The Armistice recognized the occupation by Russia of practically the whole of Turkey in Europe. Since the fall of Plevna on December 10, 1877,

³⁰ British State Papers. Vol. LXVIII, p. 871-875. Declaration of Roumanian Independence June 3, 1877.

³¹ Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. p. 391.

³² Menypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. VI, p. 230.

³³ Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 123.

the Russian troops had steadily advanced. While the delegates from the two belligerents were negotiating a basis of peace, the Russian soldiery entered Adrianople. It should seem that now, since the armistice was signed, the Russian advance should be stopped, but it was not.³⁴ All appearances pointed to a Russian occupation of Constantinople.³⁵ The English fleet was again ordered to Constantinople but was stopped a second time, not by English orders, but by Turkish.³⁶ The Grand Duke Nicholas had announced that if the British Fleet entered the Dardanelles, he would enter Constantinople. The Sultan had appealed to the British government not to permit the fleet to continue its journey. When the fleet appeared at the entrance of the Dardanelles it was stopped by the Governor of Gallipoli, who said he had orders to oppose its passage.³⁷ In London, Lord Salisbury wrote to Lord Beaconsfield, "if the fleet once more returns to Besika Bay, our position will be utterly ridiculous. We shall disgust our friends and lose all weight in Europe."³⁸ He urged immediate orders to be sent to the fleet to proceed by force. The fourth order in three weeks was then sent to the fleet. It was to move forward and if fired upon, to "return the fire."³⁹

³⁴Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. VI, p. 241.

³⁵Acton, Modern History. p. 123.

³⁶Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. VI, p. 242. Lord Beaconsfield to Lady Bradford, February 7, 1878.

³⁷Alexander Onou, "The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatyev." The Slavonic and East European Review. Vol. II, (London: 6 Great News Street, Eyre & Spotteswoode Ltd., 1932-33), p. 115.

³⁸Lady Gwendolyn Cecil, Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury. 4 vols. 1868-1880, (London: Hodder & Stoughton Limited) II, 197. Lord Salisbury to Lord Beaconsfield, February 10, 1878.

³⁹Ibid., p. 198.

An outburst of anger in Petrograd greeted this movement of the British fleet. The Grand Duke Nicholas received orders that if English ships appeared in the Bosphorus, his troops should at once enter the capitol.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the British stood firm and on February 15, the English ironclads anchored before the Golden Horn.⁴¹

Count Ignatyev reached the Russian army shortly after the armistice was signed.⁴² He urged the Grand Duke to seize Constantinople as ordered.⁴³ The Grand Duke Nicholas replied: "The order came too late. Neklidov had already come to terms with the Turkish Plenipotentiaries, and I had already agreed and could not change it. Besides, I had to give the troops a rest and give time for the artillery to come up to the units."⁴⁴

Later, by special agreement with Turkey, the Russian headquarters were established at San Stefano, a suburb of Constantinople, within the neutral zone established by the armistice. The British fleet voluntarily withdrew to a position close to Prince's Isle in the Sea of Marmora, and anchored in the Gulf of Bursa.⁴⁵ Under those conditions, the "English Whale" and the "Russian Bear" faced each other for six months.⁴⁶

It was in this situation that the Treaty of San Stefano was signed

⁴⁰Onou, The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatyev. p. 113.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 113.

⁴²Count Ignatyev was Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, and author of the Treaty of San Stefano.

⁴³Ibid., p. 111.

⁴⁴As quoted in: Onou, The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatyev. p. 111.

⁴⁵Cecil, Life of Salisbury. p. 199.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 199.

March 3, 1878.⁴⁷ During the secret negotiations, Russia did not rely on the assistance of Europe. On the contrary, she resented interference and forced the Porte to a hasty conclusion by continually drawing the cordon of Russians tighter around the Turkish capitol.⁴⁸ On March 7, 1878 the provisions of the treaty were officially published in Europe. A wave of shock went over the nations of Europe. In the words of Lord Beaconsfield, the dominion of the Ottoman Empire is abolished in Europe.⁴⁹ Ignatyev, Russian ambassador at Constantinople incorporated the hopes and aspirations of Russian opinion, particularly of the Panslav element, into the terms of the treaty. Basically, its provisions were: (1) The independence of Montenegro was reaffirmed and Serbia and Roumania were likewise recognized as independent principalities. (2) Serbia and Montenegro were to receive additional territory. (3) Roumania was to return lower Bessarabia to Russia and receive Dobruja in exchange. In addition to lower Bessarabia, Russia was to acquire an increase of territory in Transcaucasia. (4) An autonomous Bulgaria was to be erected, under the national suzerainty of Turkey, which was to compose the greater part of European Turkey. A Russian commission was to be appointed to advise and supervise the government for two years, and a Russian army of occupation would remain for the same period. (5) Russia would be paid a war indemnity, and Turkey would destroy all forts along the Danube. (6) The Straits would be open to the commerce of all nations in time of

⁴⁷ A published text of this treaty may be seen in Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. Appendix VII, p. 627-636.

⁴⁸ Cecil, Life of Salisbury. p. 199.

⁴⁹ Monypenny and Buckle, Disraeli. VI, p. 248. Lord Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria, February 16, 1878.

peace and in war to merchant ships of neutral states arriving from and bound
 to Russian ports. ⁵⁰

To the Russians, the Treaty of San Stefano was the fulfillment of a dream; to England and Austria it meant a check to their vital interests and was contrary to the Treaty of Reichstadt. To Prince Bismarck it meant a threat of war, and an end to the Dreikaiserbund, and an end to peace that Germany needed. The solution to the problem--the Congress of Berlin.

As early as 1853, the powers of Europe realized that the Ottoman Empire was crumbling. On January 9, 1853 Czar Nicholas I had said to Sir Hamilton Seymour, "We have a very sick man on our hands, and it would be a great misfortune if he should escape us, especially before all the necessary dispositions." ⁵¹ Who would be an heir to the sick old man of Europe led many of the European statesmen to reevaluate their foreign policies to see what could be gained from his death. Austria, Russia and England all found that they had very vital interests in the Balkans, and in the years from the Crimean War until the crisis of the First World's War in 1914, geared their Balkan policies to these ends.

Austria had much to gain in the Balkans, and much to lose from Russian dominance there. Since 1866 Austria was excluded from further participation in German affairs, and in the same period, found herself unable to embark on an overseas adventure in pursuit of colonies. Thus, the Balkan Peninsula became the only field open to imperial expansion. ⁵² Certainly, the dream

⁵⁰ Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 5.

⁵¹ As quoted in: Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 1338.

⁵² Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 2.

of a great empire stretching from Vienna through the Western half of the Balkan Peninsula to Salonica was attractive.⁵³ At this time, Austria could offer considerable advantages to the Balkan nations. She was strong militarily, especially in this area, she could offer the attractiveness of western civilization, and she could also offer great economic advantages. Austria had the capital to help develop Balkan lands, which were natural market areas and sources of raw material. A new Ausgleich with the Balkan nations would be a great gain for Austria.

On the other hand, Russian dominance in the Balkans could be even more disastrous to Imperial Austria. This would mean the realization of Slavic Nationalism. Since many Slavs were contained within Austria's boundaries, this would signify the beginning of internal revolt. It could even spread to the Magyars, and Imperial Austria would crumble. This position explains why Andrassy, remarked after hearing the news of the Treaty of San Stefano, "we have been played false."⁵⁴ It also explains why Austria was willing to side with England in the tense days preceding the Congress.

Even though Russia made advances in the middle East, the Balkan problem had remained the center of Russian foreign policy for 150 years.⁵⁵ The Crimean War had been a serious setback to this policy but since throwing off the shackles of the Treaty of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War, she had once again resumed her old position. Her chief goal was control of the

⁵³W. N. Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin and After. (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 36 Essex Street, Strand, W. C., 1938), p. 7.

⁵⁴Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 127.

⁵⁵Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 1.

Straits and Constantinople, the key to Russia's "back door". All Balkan interests were subordinated to the problem of the Straits. ⁵⁶

To accomplish this task, Russia had much in her favor. First, there was the Pan-Slavic ideal of the unity of the Slavs against the encroachment of the West. On this ground she could gain much support from the Balkan peoples, who had been conditioned to religious and ideological struggles for centuries of Moslem rule. On this basis she attracted Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. Secondly, Russia posed as the center of the Greek Orthodox religion. The Orthodox Church could be used to enlist the aid of Roumania and Greece. ⁵⁷ These natural advantages gave Russia the inside track over her other rivals.

Under the influence of Count Ignatyev, the Russians aimed at the creation of a new Bulgarian state which would serve as a strong advance post toward the Straits and at the same time offer a point of attraction to the other Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula. ⁵⁸ With this understanding then, when the Treaty of San Stefano was signed, Russia felt as though her century old dream had been fulfilled.

England was just as concerned with events in the Balkans as was Austria and Russia. In the early part of the Nineteenth Century, Britain had come to realize how important the Near East and the Caliphate at Constantinople was to a power which was established in India and ruled over a large number

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁸ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 880.

of Mohammedan subjects.⁵⁹ It was at this time that they also saw that the number one enemy to Turkey was Russia. Thenceforth, British policy became aimed at thwarting Russian moves against the Turk. The classic example of this was Palmerston during the Crimean War.⁶⁰ Thus, the Treaty of Paris, which concluded the war, made the support of the Turkish Empire a British principle.

The Conservative party came to power in 1874. A new spirit in the conduct of foreign affairs was at once apparent. The hesitating policy of Gladstone was supplanted by the vigorous one of Disraeli. The "Little Englanders" gave way to "Imperialists." Almost immediately upon entering the foreign office, the Conservative government embarked upon a program of colonial consolidation. Disraeli made a sensational purchase of the bankrupt Khedieve's share in the Suez Canal. (1875)⁶¹ Queen Victoria was crowned Empress of India on January 1, 1877 to impress upon the Hindus the idea of a personal sovereign. Finally, the Transvaal and Orange Free States were annexed.⁶² To Disraeli, the Eastern Question was as important now as it was in the days of Palmerston. In fact, Bismarck stated that the Suez Canal was to England like the spinal cord which connects the backbone with the brain.⁶³ The very thought of Russia in control of Constantinople

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 879.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 439.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 439.

⁶² Ibid., p. 456.

⁶³ Moritz Busch, Bismarck, Some Secret Pages of his History. 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1898), II, 322.

would be a serious blow to the British Empire. They could not afford to allow the Mediterranean to become a Russian lake as it would if Russia controlled the Straits. The question then was how to defend the empire.

Disraeli based his dealings with the Eastern Question on the London Conference of 1871. This conference was held after Gorchakov denounced the Black Sea Clause of the Treaty of Paris, and proclaimed that the Czar would reserve his "sovereign rights" in those waters.⁶⁴ The Treaty of Paris was upheld with the exception of the naval force on the Black Sea. It was on the Treaty of Paris thus revised by the Conference of London that Disraeli took his stand on the Eastern Question.⁶⁵

It is now apparent why Disraeli took the course he followed, as the Russian armies closed in on Constantinople. This also explains why after the Treaty of San Stefano was announced that he made these statements in his speech in the House of Lords:

The Treaty of San Stefano completely abrogates Turkey in Europe; it abolishes the dominion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe; it creates a large state who, under the name of Bulgaria was to have a Prince virtually selected by Russia, and administered and supervised by Russia, and a garrison furnished for two years by Russia...all of the European dominions of the Ottoman are taken, and for that power is substituted Russia herself. The same would be of Turkey in Asia. Batum, a port on the Black Sea, which was not captured by the Russians, was to be taken from Turkey. The Black Sea would be as much a Russian lake as the Caspian. Bessarabia, which was taken from Russia to protect the navigation of the Danube, was again restored to Russia. The control of the Straits would again be under Russian domination.⁶⁶

In Disraeli's eyes, the Treaty of San Stefano had to be set aside, and it is toward this goal that he directed his energies at the Congress of

⁶⁴ Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 19.

⁶⁵ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 881.

⁶⁶ As quoted in: Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 1130.

Berlin.

Thus, Austrian, English and Russian interests clash over the Eastern Question. With the English fleet opposite the Russian Army at Constantinople and with Austria threatening to mobilize her army in aid of England, the threat to peace is very much evident. It is with this situation that Bismarck is faced in the years 1876-1878, and it is this situation that must be solved by the Congress of Berlin.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROAD TO THE CONGRESS

As events in the Balkans continued to move from one crisis to another between the years 1875-1877 this question might be asked. What was the attitude of Prince Bismarck and what role did he play in the diplomatic negotiations that took place? His attitudes and actions are best divided into four different periods. From the beginning of the Balkan Crisis until December 1875, he was unconcerned. In December 1875, he moved from this policy to one of action. His fear of becoming isolated forced him to initiate negotiations with Britain. The third phase began in April 1876. The position taken by the Iron Chancellor at this time was a return to his policy of disinterest and aloofness. Finally, in 1878, when Russian armies were encamped on the outskirts of Constantinople, and the British fleet anchored within sight of them, his attitude changed to an immediate desire to solve the problem through an international congress. A close look at the details surrounding these years will point this out.

While resting at his estate in Varzin, Bismarck first heard the news of the Balkan insurrection. At first little attention was paid to the situation. He was more concerned with mapping out his internal war against the National Liberals and evaluating the success of his Kulturkampf. In fact, Bismarck for a short time welcomed the situation. This attitude is clearly revealed in a letter to the Emperor William I dated August 13, 1875:

The Turkish question can hardly assume large proportions if the three imperial courts remain united...moreover, it can only be of advantage to us if public attention and the policy of other powers

should, for a while, be directed elsewhere than to the Franco-German question. ¹

Bismarck had no regrets that the revolt had taken place. He hated the Turks with a true Lutheran contempt and he believed that the peoples of the Balkans would some day break from their Turkish masters.² He did not feel that war between Austria and Russia would come, and if Russia became aggressive, Britain would intervene to prevent them from being too successful.³

Therefore, from the beginning of complications in the East he kept aloof as far as possible. His chief effort as expressed by Bülow, Foreign Minister, in a dispatch on December eighth, 1875 to Alvensleben, Charge d' Affaires at St. Petersburg, centered in the maintenance of the Dreikaiserbund, with its basis of freedom of action, and in adherence to the joint decisions and actions of Russia and Austria combined. Bismarck expressly discouraged any inclination to influence in any direction the development of affairs in Turkey.⁴ In a memorandum on November 9, 1876 he said, "If the Emperor Alexander II makes war on Turkey, it will do us no harm, and if he is allowed to act without interference, it is to the advantage of the general peace."⁵ On November 10, he wrote Bülow: "Our attitude will be similiar to that of Russia on the situation of 1870, and

¹ Busch, Bismarck. p. 527. Letter from Bismarck to Emperor William I, Varzin, August 15, 1875.

² Taylor, Bismarck. p. 168.

³ Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 391.

⁴ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 20. von Bülow to Alvensleben, German Note No. 20.

⁵ Ibid., p. 36. Memorandum by Prince Bismarck, November 9, 1876.

further that we are gratified at the peaceful intentions of Russia towards Austria. (Treaty of Reichstadt) I am grateful for the communication and ready to offer our services." ⁶

Again, on December 18, 1875 he said to his guests: "The immediate future was free from care; the only cloud in the skies, little Herzegovina could not disturb Germany." ⁷ Bismarck's attitude towards the Eastern Question was again brought out in December 1876, when he made the statement "Germany had no interest in the Eastern Question, that was worth the healthy bones of a Pomeranian musketeer." ⁸ It appeared as though Bismarck attempted to adopt an attitude of amicable detachment during the early period of the conflict. ⁹

In Bismarck's mind, the Near Eastern Question could work well for Germany provided that a war which would dissolve the Dreikaiserbund could be averted. Also, no action which would result in a Russian, Austrian and French alliance against Germany could be taken. In fact, Germany possibly could hope to gain in the long run by a movement of the interests of Russia and Austria and their mutual rivalries towards the East. Furthermore, Russia would be impelled to take up a strong defensive position in the East, and on her own shores, thus forcing her to stand in need of the German alliance. There was also a strong possibility that a wedge could be driven between England and France over the Egyptian and Mediterranean

⁶ Ibid., p. 37. Prince Bismarck to von Bülow, November 10, 1876.

⁷ As quoted in: David Harris, A Diplomatic History of the Balkan Crisis of 1875-1878. (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 171.

⁸ As quoted in: Taylor, Bismarck. p. 167.

⁹ Ibid., p. 168.

questions, leaving France completely isolated in Europe. Finally, this situation could also work to develop relations between Russia and Austria such as may make it difficult for them both to join in carrying on the anti-German conspiracy, which in some measure attracted the clerical and centralizing elements in Europe. Therefore, the policy adopted by the Iron Chancellor during the early days of the conflict was to set back and let events take their course.

The initiative for negotiating the Balkan dispute was taken not by Bismarck but by Count Julius Andrassy of Austria. First getting approval of the members of the Dreikaiserbund, the Andrassy note was sent to the powers of Europe for approval in December 30, 1875. The German government readily agreed to the plan and promised that their ambassadors would be instructed to support the Austrian plan.¹⁰ It pressed upon the Sultan a series of reforms, the major ones being equality of religion, abolition of tax farming, restriction of taxes to the use of the province in which they were raised, land reform and the establishment of a European commission of revision. Andrassy urged their immediate concession in act; otherwise, the powers could not continue to assist in the pacification of the disturbed districts. The note was dispatched to France, Italy and England with a request for their adherence.¹¹ The Porte, as usual, was profuse in promises. However, as the revolt spread to include Serbia and Montenegro the Andrassy note fell into disregard.

At this time Bismarck entered into the second phase of his actions

¹⁰ Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 171.

¹¹ Seton Watson, England and Germany. p. 516.

during the negotiations. For a time he abandoned passive inaction for a plan of his own.¹² Bismarck feared that Russia had abandoned the Dreikaiserbund and had started planning with the French. Here he could see the rise of a hostile coalition that could be enlarged to include Austria.¹³ The basis of Bismarck's scare was a report from the German Ambassador in Paris, von Hohenlohe. It stated that the politicians in Paris were so encouraged by Russian attention that President Thiers was talking of reviving French influence and power through participating in a settlement of the Eastern Question under the patronage of the Czar.¹⁴ His fears were encouraged on the thirty first of December when he held a baffling interview with Goutaut-Brion, French Ambassador in Berlin.¹⁵ Bismarck was asked if it would be possible to separate Alsace and Lorraine from Germany for a large sum of money. Prince Bismarck answered that this would be impossible. He said, "the very reasons that caused Germany to acquire the territory required them to keep it."¹⁶

In Bismarck's mind, relations with Austria had also become complicated. A report came that Austria's program was to be made, on Gorchakov's request, a European program and that Andrassy was ready to yield to Russian wishes.¹⁷ Although Russia and Austria were working through the Dreikaiserbund,

¹² Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 171.

¹³ Ibid., p. 172.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 162.

¹⁵ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 27. von Hohenlohe to von Bülow, Berlin, December 28, 1875, Document No. 195.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁷ Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 173.

their cooperation plus their attitude towards France, caused Bismarck considerable anxiety.

As a result of these developments, Bismarck approached Lord Odo Russell, English Ambassador at Berlin, and expressed a desire to establish with London an understanding whereby German support would be given to England's wishes in case of further complications in Turkey.¹⁸ On the first of February 1876, Bismarck renewed his offer of German support for Britain in the Eastern Question. However, the British delayed until the sixteenth of February before answering. Lord Derby wrote that, "England would not and could not enter into an exclusive alliance. A concerted action with Germany cannot be definitely adopted without a clearer knowledge than we now possess of the motives which have led to Prince Bismarck's recent overtures."¹⁹ Negotiations between Germany and England were then dropped. By February 19, 1876, the situation looked much better to Bismarck.

In the Spring of 1876, Prince Gorchakov of Russia expressed a desire that a meeting of the Dreikaiserbund should be held. Even though the Treaty of Reichstadt had been signed, he feared a possible Russian-Austrian clash.²⁰ The Andrassy note caused much concern in Russian circles because it provided evidence that Count Andrassy had intentions of taking an active part in the crisis. Therefore, the Czar proposed that Gorchakov, Bismarck and Andrassy should take the opportunity of his own upcoming visit to Berlin and meet to devise joint measures for the Balkans. In early April, Gorchakov wrote

¹⁸ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 892.

¹⁹ As quoted in: Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 176.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 288.

Andrassy inviting him to meet at Berlin:

His Majesty would like very much to meet with him in order to express his satisfaction with the perfect accord which has never ceased to preside over the march of the two cabinets in a crisis which interests both of them to the same degree. His Majesty thinks that it would be useful to exchange ideas in private conversations with regard to eventualities which might have to be envisaged for the maintenance of general peace. ²¹

Andrassy willingly accepted the invitation. He was eager to enlist the aid of the "great man in Berlin." ²² Andrassy also notified Russia that he would arrive in Berlin two days early so that an understanding ²³ could be reached with Bismarck.

In May 1876, an incident occurred that brought Bismarck into action. ²⁴ Mohammedan rioters murdered the French and German consuls at Salonica. Bismarck willingly agreed to a meeting of the Dreikaiserbund after this incident. On May 11, 1876, Alexander II and his entourage arrived at Berlin, and for ten days, the rituals of uniformed and medaled majesty alternated ²⁵ with the business of the Conference.

In this conference, Bismarck opened proceedings by stressing that he was indifferent to the means whereby an understanding was reached. He let it be known that his great concern was Austrian-Russian cooperation and he was ready to endorse any arrangement made concerning Turkey. ²⁶ Bismarck's

²¹ Ibid., p. 288. Prince Gorchakov to Count Andrassy, April 4, 1876.

²² As quoted in: Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. p. 161.

²³ Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 289.

²⁴ Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. p. 162.

²⁵ Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 295.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 168.

attitude was disclosed in a letter written by Count Andrassy to the Emperor Francis Joseph: "The Imperial Chancellor holds fast to the necessity of the alliance of the three powers in the interest of the monarchical principle. Germany makes no proposal, will accept anything on which the two allies are agreed." ²⁷ Germany at this time was concerned only with promoting Austro-Russian unity. When the two powers agreed, Germany agreed; if they did not, Germany could not cast the deciding vote. ²⁸ This is the position Bismarck stressed. However, he supported Andrassy on practically every point. A close look at the discussions will give evidence of his actions.

Gorchakov entered the Congress with a prepared program. It had been prepared by General Ignatyev and stressed these points:

1. There were only two ways of solving the problem of the insurgents. The first was to constitute them into an autonomous principality under Prince Nicholas of Montenegro. The second was to cede to Montenegro the mountainous part of the province adjacent to the principality and endow the remainder with broad immunities....
2. Montenegro should be recognized as independent and receive an increase of territory either in Herzegovina or on the coast, together with certain areas which had long been the object of contest between the principality and Turkey.
3. Serbia should be given little Zvornik, which had for many years been a source of friction between vassal and suzerain states.
4. The ferman of December (The armistice as provided by the Andrassy note) should be progressively extended under the supervision of the powers for the benefit of the Christians. ²⁹

Andrassy immediately opposed the major points of this program. Bismarck

²⁷ Ibid., p. 292. Count Andrassy to Emperor Francis Joseph, Berlin, May 12, 1876.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 77.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 294.

sided with Austria to the extent Gorchakov was forced to abandon his plan. This is evident in the telegram sent by Andrassy to Emperor Francis Joseph. On May 12, he said, "Gorchakov yesterday proposed the intervention of a third power which he did not name, and the entry of the fleet into the harbor of Kiek. Both propositions I resolutely rejected and was supported by Bismarck." ³⁰ In the evening of the same day Andrassy telegraphed his Emperor again: "Gorchakov is as soft as butter, has completely given way on all the points unsatisfactory for us. Now I am hoping that the Entente will come out of this meeting undamaged." ³¹

Thus Gorchakov, was forced to abandon Russian plans in the face of Austrian opposition backed by Bismarck. Gorchakov's plans were thrown away, and for them was substituted a document which with the exception of a closing sentence, was dictated by Andrassy himself. ³² Finally, the three ministers pledged their complete unity in the Eastern Question. ³³

The Berlin Memorandum was drafted which embodied demands for a two months armistice in which the belligerents should attempt to arrive at an understanding and further reforms, most of which were already outlined in the Andrassy note. ³⁴ The memorandum was telegraphed to the powers for approval on May 13, 1876, and an immediate reply was urged, as the Emperors

³⁰ Ibid., p. 294. Telegram from Count Andrassy to Emperor Francis Joseph, May 12, 1876.

³¹ Ibid., p. 297. Telegram from Count Andrassy to Emperor Francis Joseph, May 12, 1876.

³² Ibid., p. 297.

³³ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 22.

³⁴ Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. p. 163.

planned to leave Berlin on May 15.³⁵ Italy and France acquiesced but England declined. Lord Derby replied on May 19, giving several reasons for England's refusal, three of which are important: England could only act with the consent of negotiations carried on by the concert; the provisions for a two months armistice might be unjust to Turkey if hostilities were resumed; and it would be impossible for the Porte to make the required economic reconstruction because it would involve too much expense.³⁶

One other incident came out of the Berlin meeting. Prince Gorchakov of Russia conceived the plan of a great European Congress with Germany, the disinterested power taking the initiative in calling a Congress consisting of the Prime Ministers of the six European powers.³⁷ At this point Bismarck stressed his role of disinterest. He refused to take the lead for a congress fearing that to do so would break up the Three Emperor's League. In a letter to Bülow, Bismarck gave the reasons for refusing:

I consider it dangerous to the Kaiserbündniss, to peace and to Germany's relations towards her allies, for a Congress or a Conference to be held. The danger rests on the fact that Austria's interests lie much nearer to those of England than of Russia, and that a Congress will sharply accentuate this difference, seeing that Austria will be obliged to choose between the two absolutely opposed interests of England and Russia...up to the present the Dreikaiserbündniss has been the security for peace. If it is weakened and relaxed by the deliberate rapprochement to one another of England-Austria and Russia-France respectively, the impossibility of reconciling Austria, Russia and British interests in the East will lead to war...Germany would be called upon day after day to act as umpire between two hostile groups at the Congress, the most thankless task that could befall us.³⁸

³⁵Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. VI, p. 24.

³⁶T. E. Kebbel, Select Speeches of the Late Honorable Earl of Beaconsfield. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1882), VII, 160. Speech on the Bulgarian Atrocities.

³⁷Dugdale, German Documents. p. 22.

³⁸Ibid., p. 29. Prince Bismarck to von Bülow, August 14, 1876.

When Prince Gorchakov urged that the powers work together because this was not a German or a Russian but a European question, Bismarck replied:

I have always found the word Europe on the lips of those politicians who wanted something from other powers which they dared not demand in their own names. Of course as Christians we ought to have sympathy for suffering humanity everywhere and especially for suffering Christians in foreign lands. But this sympathy did not oblige me to risk Germany's power. ³⁹

Bismarck was unwilling to risk German security at this time. He pledged complete aloofness, and at the meeting of the three Emperors, refused Gorchakov's motion to send a fleet to Klek. His reasoning is pointed out by this statement to the Emperor in the Fall of 1876:

As regards the participation by the German fleet in some kind of a demonstration by sea, I trust that his majesty is holding firmly to the intention of refusing to take part in any active naval demonstration which is not both approved and supported by all the powers. The naval forces which are now in the waters of the Levant, could make no effective demonstrations without England. We have no apparent interest to justify us in mobilizing our sea forces in other parts. ⁴⁰

In the Autumn of 1876, after the Turks suppressed the uprising and defeated the semi-independent Slav state of Serbia, Pan-Slavism in Russia could no longer be restrained. The Czar was willing to go to war against Turkey, but the example of the Crimean War made him hesitate. Russia must not fall again into isolation that had led them to disaster, so before an aggressive policy could be launched in the Balkans, allies had to be found that could secure her flanks.

Imperial Germany was approached in two ways. First, Czar Alexander II asked William I to keep Austria neutral by threats as Russia had done for

³⁹ Ibid., p. 29. Prince Bismarck to Bülow, August 14, 1876.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 20. Memorandum of Prince Bismarck, October 4, 1876.

Prussia during the Franco-Prussian War.⁴¹ At the same time Gorchakov approached Bismarck through General von Werder, German military plenipotentiary to Russia, for some expression on the question as to whether or not Germany would remain neutral if Russia went to war with Austria.⁴² This situation became delicate for Bismarck. Here posed the potential destruction of the Three Emperor's League. He was being asked to support Russian interests in the Balkans; interests that were directly against those of England and more important, Austria. To sign a blank check for Russia would mean the loss of Austria. Besides, England could very well be pushed into an Anglo-Austrian-French coalition, leaving Germany isolated on the continent. Here the old problem of the nightmare of coalitions threatened Bismarck again. He answered through the German Ambassador to Russia, von Schweinitz, with this statement:

Our first care was to preserve the friendship between the great monarchies which in a struggle with one another had more to lose as regarded their opposition to the revolution than they had to win. If to our sorrow, this was not possible between Austria and Russia then we could endure indeed that our friends should lose or win battles against each other, but not that one of the two should be so severely wounded and injured that its position as an independent great power taking part in the Councils of Europe would be endangered...Germany would not remain neutral.⁴³

Just as he had done in the Conference of May 1876, Bismarck refused to support Russia. With this ambiguous statement, and Bismarck's refusal to commit himself, still holding to his aloofness, Russia dropped negotiations with Germany and began proceedings with Austria. The Reichstadt agreement

⁴¹ Taylor, Bismarck. p. 168.

⁴² Butler, Bismarck. p. 234.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 234.

which had been signed July 8, 1876, in which Gorchakov and Andrassy agreed upon what they would tolerate in the Balkans, became the only insurance Russia could gain against isolation. Bismarck remained content not to be a party to this agreement. So long as Russia and Austria were in agreement, he was content to remain aloof. ⁴⁴

What complicated the picture at this time was the position taken by England. Disraeli returned to power determined to guide England in an active foreign policy. Foremost in his plans was the preservation of the Ottoman Empire, no matter what the cost. The chief concern of Bismarck was caused by the fact that Austria's interests gravitated closer to England's than towards Russia's as far as the Balkans were concerned. If Russia was successful in the Balkans, and the threat of war became evident, Austria would be drawn closer to England. Bismarck's policy towards this situation is evident in this statement:

The most unpleasant possibility of all would be a war between Austria and Russia, especially if Austria were invaded. This would produce consequences, which a war between Russia and England would not. These two powers cannot deal each other mortal blows. They only hinder each other's schemes and prevent the carrying out of a particular object, but not kill each other. So from this standpoint there is no need for us to prevent such a war. Whereas, since a Russo-Austrian War involves danger for us, we are forced to do our utmost first and foremost to stop it by one means or another. ⁴⁵

With these factors in mind Bismarck entered into the fourth phase of the negotiations prior to the Congress. He changed his ideas concerning German participation in a conference and agreed to send a delegate to the Constantinople Conference, December 23, 1876. In regards to the conference

⁴⁴ Taylor, Bismarck. p. 168.

⁴⁵ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 33. von Bülow to Count Münster, London, November 27, 1876.

Bismarck wrote to Lord Salisbury of England:

In my opinion it is an error, and probably a deliberate one, to suppose as apparently it is supposed in various parties, that the wisdom of statesmen can discover a magic recipe for the maintenance of peace, where as peace can in fact be assured only if one or more of the interested powers will make concessions to each other, by lowering the demand or discarding their mutual suspicions...I believe that the present tensions would have never have happened, if England had come into line at the time of the Berlin Conference. ⁴⁶

In regards to Turkey, Prince Bismarck once again let his views be known. He said to Lord Salisbury: "All Turkey in which I included the various races inhabiting it, is not so valuable a political institution to justify the civilized people of Europe in injuring themselves and each other in a great war for her sake." ⁴⁷

The object touching German policy most clearly was to get over the present crisis without disturbing the existing good relations with their friends. The primary object was that peace should be maintained between Russia and Turkey, and the present difficulties settled by a conference. Bismarck further suggested to England that should the conference fail not all would be lost. He recommended that Lord Salisbury follow this plan:

In the event that the Conference failed the second step lay before them; the probability of a Russian advance into Turkey...Even so the peace of Europe need not necessarily be disturbed...He would warn England against undue haste if Russia crossed the Balkans...England might well take action without going to war with Russia by entering into posession of Egypt or probably Constantinople. In this case Russia would occupy Bulgaria, Austria Bosnia and England Constantinople. I doubt that the Turk could ever again be set on its hind legs. ⁴⁸

Bismarck was willing to sacrifice Turkey for the interests of European

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 34. Memorandum by Prince Bismarck, October 20, 1876.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 34. Memorandum by Prince Bismarck, October 20, 1876.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 41. von Bülow, to Count Münster in London, November 27, 1876.

peace. This is evident by this statement made in his memoirs, "This may be only a fantasy of my imagination, but if I had a commanding voice in the situation, I would try to preserve peace between the European powers at the expense of Turkey which cannot be preserved intact in any case."⁴⁹

As feared by Bismarck, the Constantinople Conference failed. It dissolved on January 20, 1877 with the question unsettled. The London Protocol was then circulated among the major powers. It called for reciprocal disarmament of Russian and Turkish forces.⁵⁰ This too was declined by the Porte and Russian forces once again invaded Turkish territory.

This did not surprise Bismarck. After a conference with Count Ignatyev of Russia, who had been sent to Berlin to test Bismarck's attitude, the Iron Chancellor told Emperor William, "My final impression derived from this long and complicated interview (with General Ignatyev) is that Russia in spite of her assurance of preference for a peaceful solution, will strike and will hardly wait for the proposed draft to be generally accepted."⁵¹

Bismarck felt that he must now act in order to prevent a war in which two of her allies would be on different sides. To do this Bismarck desired a British-Russian compromise. This could be reached by urging that England occupy Egypt and Russia the Black Sea. In this situation both might find it possible to maintain the status quo for a long period.⁵²

⁴⁹ As quoted in: Sonnag, Germany and England. p. 149

⁵⁰ British State Papers. Vol. LXVIII, p. 825. Declaration made by the Earl of Derby before the signature of the Protocol.

⁵¹ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 42. Prince Bismarck to the Emperor William, March 4, 1877.

⁵² Ibid., p. 42. Memorandum by Prince Bismarck dictated at Kissingen.

After the failure of the London Protocol and Russia's invasion of Turkish territory, a possible English-Russian war loomed larger and larger. Soon Russian troops entered San Stefano and the English fleet was dispatched closer to the area. One spark could ignite the powder keg that existed. To make matters worse, when the Treaty of San Stefano was announced, Andrassy loudly exclaimed, "we have been played false." The danger of Austria being drawn into the war on the side of England alarmed the Iron Chancellor.

Leadership in this situation did not come from Bismarck. Again it came from Andrassy of Austria. In January 1878, Count Andrassy urged that a conference be held in Vienna composed of the powers who were parties to the Treaty of Paris of 1856 and the Protocol of London, 1877.⁵³ The purpose of this meeting would be to determine the terms of peace between Russia and Turkey. The armistice of January 31, 1878 failed to recognize or make provisions for the agreement of Reichstadt between Austria and Russia, according to which Austria was to have Bosnia and Herzegovina as a reward for her neutrality if Russia went to war against Turkey. Andrassy had been "played false". For this reason, Austria, acting in the right of one of the signatory powers to the Treaty of Paris extended the invitations.⁵⁴

England accepted the invitation on February 4, and agreed to Vienna as the place of meeting.⁵⁵ M. Waddington of France answered that he would adhere to the proposition under the reservation that the program of the deliber-

⁵³ British State Papers. Vol. LXIX, p. 795. The Earl of Derby to Count Beust, February 7, 1878.

⁵⁴ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 61.

⁵⁵ British State Papers. Vol. LXIX, p. 794. The Earl of Derby to Sir H. Elliot, February 4, 1878.

ations would be limited and definite.⁵⁶ Russia did not formally accept or reject the proposals for a conference. When Vienna was proposed as the meeting place, Russia questioned the desirability of the Austrian capitol for the conference. Later she suggested Baden-Baden for a meeting place and the conference to be held sometime in March.⁵⁷

Prince Bismarck accepted in behalf of the German government and later settled the confusion over where the conference would be held by following a Gorchakov suggestion, and invited the powers to Berlin. The proposed time was March 3, 1878.⁵⁸

It was at this time that the Treaty of San Stefano was announced by the Russians. Bismarck then postponed the Congress until the Russo-Turkish conditions were generally and publicly known to all parties.⁵⁹ England complicated the situation further by stating that before she would agree to a conference all questions dealt with in the treaty of peace between Russia and Turkey should be considered as subject to discussion in the conference or congress, and that no alteration in the condition of things previously established by treaty should be acknowledged as valid until it had received the assent of the powers.⁶⁰ To this Prince Gorchakov replied, "All the great powers know already that the complete text of the preliminary treaty of peace with the Porte will be communicated to them as soon as the

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 798. The Earl of Derby to Sir H. Elliot, March 8, 1878.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 798. The Earl of Derby to Count Beust, March 9, 1878.

⁵⁸ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 62. Prince Bismarck to von Bülow, January 30, 1878.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 63. Prince Bismarck to Bülow, February 6, 1878.

⁶⁰ British State Papers. Vol. LXIX, p. 800. Earl of Derby to Count Beust, March 9, 1878.

ratifications shall have been exchanged..we have nothing to conceal."⁶¹

Bismarck once again took the initiative and proposed that a preliminary conference be held to settle all misunderstandings. In this way all preliminary questions would be so arranged that the ministers who were to conduct the negotiations would be relieved of them.⁶² England refused to take part in planning this conference so it was dropped.⁶³

While negotiations were proceeding the situation became more acute. On February 13, British ships under Admiral Hornby sailed into the Sea of Marmora and anchored off of the Isle des Princes. This situation is reflected in a statement from Bismarck to von Schweinitz in St. Petersburg:

Lord Odo Russell, himself naturally a peace lover, was convinced on Saturday that war was imminent and was instructed to ask me what attitude Germany would adopt towards it. On Monday telegrams arrived from London and Vienna urging us to arrange for the conference at an early date. England adding that an early meeting promised the last remaining chance of staving off war...Prince Gorchakov is quite aware what he is about and does not need our advise; but I beg that you will communicate the foregoing facts to him.⁶⁴

With the probability of war drawing closer and closer, England and Russia refused to take part in a Congress until their views were assured. The major issue in dispute was that England demanded that all peace conditions be laid before the Congress and would consider as binding only those articles to which she herself shall have agreed.⁶⁵ Russia at the same time had made

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 801. Earl of Derby to Lord A. Loftus, March 14, 1878.

⁶² Ibid., p. 801. Earl of Derby to Lord Odo Russell, March 15, 1878.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 803. Earl of Derby to Lord Odo Russell, March 16, 1878.

⁶⁴ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 62. Prince Bismarck to von Schweinitz in St. Petersburg, February 20, 1878.

⁶⁵ British State Papers. Vol. LXIX, p. 802. The Earl of Derby to Count Schuvalov, March 16, 1878.

assurances to its own nation that it would allow discussion and European sanction only over points which the Russian Cabinet regarded as departures from the Treaties of 1856 and 1871.

On February 19, 1878 Bismarck delivered before the Reichstag, a speech in which he stated his views and position at the proposed congress. Here he pictured himself as the "Honest Broker who gets the business done."⁶⁶ Bismarck announced his idea as a basis for the conference and sent telegrams to all of the powers. His major views were:

1. The conference would meet to examine those articles in the peace of San Stefano, which affected former European treaties, to wit, the Peace of Paris, 1856, and the London enactment, 1871.
2. The first requirement for the business of the conference is consequently the communication of those articles by the powers concerned, Russia and Turkey.
3. The negotiations may attain wider proportion, since the other powers, on becoming acquainted with the Treaty of San Stefano, may offer objections, protests and counter proposals.
4. The French government's desire that no questions will come forward for discussion which do not arise immediately out of the treaty conditions, should be met.
5. As regards a date for the conference, we shall wait until the other powers are agreed.⁶⁷

Even after this plan was drafted England and Russia still refused to come to terms. Prince Gorchakov declared in distinct terms that he would not allow the articles of the treaty relating to the cession of Bessarabian Moldavia to be discussed by the Congress.⁶⁸ Lord Salisbury answered this statement by holding to the proposition that by the declaration annexed to the first protocol of the conference held in London in 1871, the great powers

⁶⁶Dugdale, German Documents. p. 72. Count Münster to von Bülow, March 9, 1878.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 72. Count Münster to von Bülow, March 9, 1878.

⁶⁸British State Papers. Vol. LXIX, p. 806. Sir H. Elliot to the Earl of Derby, Vienna, March 23, 1878.

recognized that no power can liberate itself from the engagement of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting powers.⁶⁹ Lord Beaconsfield backed this statement by declaring: "I hope it will be clearly understood that we shall not attend the congress if Russia does not agree to lay all the conditions and stipulations before it. Preparations for war would be proceeded with more energy than ever."⁷⁰

Day after day went by with neither side budging. The Russian Cabinet could not agree to British demands because of fear of the Press and public opinion.⁷¹ England on the other hand, could not back down because of the ministers being so deeply committed to Parliament.⁷² It looked as though war would be a reality. Lord Derby resigned as Foreign Secretary. He was replaced by Lord Salisbury. Disraeli also announced that the Queen had authorized him to call up the reserves.⁷³ William I of Germany exclaimed, "so the die is cast." Apparently all plans for the Congress fell through.

Once again Bismarck entered the picture in order to avoid war. Early in April 1878, he attempted to justify his claim as the "Honest Broker" by dispatching the following message to Russia and England:

Our gracious master, the Emperor, guided by the conviction that

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 807. Marquis of Salisbury to Her Majesties Embassies, April 1, 1878.

⁷⁰ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 73. Count Münster in London to von Bülow, March 9, 1878.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 77. Count Münster to von Bülow, March 22, 1878.

⁷² Ibid., p. 79. Count Münster to von Bülow, March 27, 1878.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 79. Count Münster to von Bülow, March 27, 1878.

neither Russia nor England regard war as an unavoidable necessity, does not despair that peace can be maintained between these two powers, both of them friendly to Germany...the close neighborhood of the British fleet and the Russian army before Constantinople might through some unforeseen event lead to a conflict...we suggest an agreement somewhat in the following form: The British fleet leave Constantinople and to repass the Dardanelles--the Russian forces to retire from the Bosphorus to a distance equivalent to the time required to reinstate the British fleet in its present position. ⁷⁴

The two powers at once accepted the mediation of Prince Bismarck and the English fleet and Russian armies were moved in accordance with the proposal. ⁷⁵

Bismarck's next concern was to secure the Congress. If the powers would agree to meet, then all controversial questions would be discussed in concert. Lord Salisbury replied however, that he was not in favor of a conference being held until agreement of certain points could be settled by direct negotiations. In addition, he added that he would prefer to conduct the negotiations with the assistance of friendly council from the Imperial government. ⁷⁶ To this Bismarck replied: "We could scarcely refuse this, if both desire it. But they must conduct the actual negotiations with one another. Otherwise there will be confusion owing to the crossing of proposals." ⁷⁷

Bismarck notified Russia that he would mediate no longer and if they wanted to negotiate directly through Count Schuvalov, Britain would accept. This opened the way to the Salisbury-Schuvalov negotiations. In a letter

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 81. Count Münster to von Bülow, March 28, 1878.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 91. Prince Bismarck to Count Münster, April 9, 1878.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 81. Prince Bismarck to Count Münster, April 9, 1878.

⁷⁷ Cecil, Life of Salisbury. p. 243.

to the Queen, Lord Salisbury described the Count's approach:

Count Schuvalov proceeded to dwell upon the main negotiations and to express the opinion that the best way of carrying them to a successful issue was that we should state to him what were the points we insisted most, and that he should go back to St. Petersburg and contact sinister influences in the Foreign Office. ⁷⁸

Lord Salisbury then drew up a statement of concessions distinguishing between those he would fight for and those he would submit to bargaining. Count Schuvalov also submitted a list and all that was left to effect a peaceful settlement was to play a diplomatic game of chess by matching and trading mutual concessions. ⁷⁹ The Salisbury-Schuvalov agreement, signed June 1, 1878, was the green light for Bismarck to issue invitations to the Congress. Accordingly, they were dispatches to the powers stating that the Congress would convene July 13, 1878.

It was agreed by the powers that the Congress would be ad referendum so that every matter could be decided upon at that time. Thus the stage was set for an international congress. Instead of war being a reality it now became a remote possibility.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 218. Lord Salisbury to Queen Victoria, April 29, 1878. By sinister influences in the Foreign Office, Count Schuvalov was referring to the influence of Prince Gorchakov and Count Ignatyev, upon Russian foreign policy.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 252.

CHAPTER V

AT THE CONGRESS

The Congress of Berlin was convened Thursday June 13, 1878. It was held in Berlin in the Chancellor's former home, Radziwill palace. The setting for the Congress was in the main ball room. Here a green table, shaped like a horseshoe, had been placed. In the middle was the President's seat; the delegates from France sat on the left, Austria on the right. The delegates from England sat next to Austria, those from Italy next to France. Further down the Russians sat on the right, the delegates from Turkey on the left. A recorder, Radowitz, was placed opposite Bismarck.¹

It was into this room that the statesmen of the major powers of Europe would file in order to decide the fate of nations, millions of people, and the future policy of Europe. It was also here that one of the three great Congresses of the Nineteenth Century was destined to be held.

The Berlin Congress which sat from June 13 until July 13 is certainly one of the most memorable in the history of international relations by reason of the eminence of the men who attended it and the significance of its results.² It marks one of those dramatic pauses in the history of the world when statesmen meet face to face in the council chamber as the representatives of seemingly irreconcilable policies.³ Yet, this Congress had

¹ George W. Chrystal, The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1905), p. 213.

² Robert Balmain Mowat, The Concert of Europe. (London: Macmillian & Co., Ltd., 1930), p. 63.

³ Percy Evans Lewin, The German Road to the East. (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917), p. 28.

a majority of its work already done before it met. The secret Salisbury-Schuvalov Protocol of May 30, which was mentioned earlier, is one example of this fact. Also at this Congress, many of the remaining questions were to be settled behind the scenes and sometimes behind the backs of the interested parties, while others were not to be discussed at all. The assembly was frequently fore-ordained to meet and consider plans that already had been settled by secret combinations, and nothing remained for discomfited parties but to acquiesce with the best grace possible.⁴ Disraeli pointed out this situation best with the statement, "all questions are publicly introduced and then privately settled."⁵

The Congress of Berlin differed from earlier European concerts by one more fact. At Berlin no Sovereigns were present. It was the ministers who filled the public's gaze. Most statesmen of the first rank found their way to the council and they were so delegated with authority that their decisions could be binding.⁶

This was a Congress of "Greater Europe." The five powers, Germany, Russia, England, France and Italy took it upon themselves to decide the difficulties. Greece, Roumania, Serbia, Montenegro and Persia were not even allowed to have ministers at the conference table.⁷ The activity of these smaller nations was spent voicing applause for some favorite point and approaching the body for the favored right to be heard.

⁴ Lewin, The German Road. p. 128.

⁵ As quoted in: R.W. Seton Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone & the Eastern Question. (London: F. Cass, 1962), p. 464.

⁶ Ibid., p. 433.

⁷ Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 356.

Even though time not spent in the Council Chambers was spent in social engagements such as official receptions, formal balls and supper parties, there was not the pomp and ceremony attached to the Congress of Berlin as there had been to other European conferences. Perhaps the most exciting hour of the whole Congress was when a small yacht, which, owing to a sudden squall, seemed likely to upset and put an end to European diplomacy.⁸ No doubt, much of this was due to the advanced age and ill-health of so many of the plenipotentiaries.

The terms and provisions that came out of the Congress were given top priority by the newspapers of Europe. Every major newspaper maintained reporters at Berlin. The most famous correspondent was M. de Blowitz of the Paris Times. Prince Bismarck made the members pledge themselves to absolute silence on the deliberations of the Congress.⁹ Nevertheless, Blowitz was able to get first-hand information on the proceeding of the Congress through a young friend whom Blowitz has declined to name. Notes over the day's proceedings would then be taken by Blowitz's young friend to a cab owned by Blowitz. Later, an exchange of hats was used to complete the exchange of information.¹⁰ Blowitz was able to give detailed accounts of the Congressional proceedings soon after they occurred. This led Prince Bismarck, at one of the meetings to lift the table cloth, solemnly look under the table, and when asked what he was doing, to have replied, "I am looking for

⁸ Chrystral, The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 229.

⁹ Blowitz, Memoirs of M. de Blowitz. p. 124.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 124.

Blowitz."¹¹ With this information, Blowitz was able to publish the final treaty twelve hours before it was announced in Berlin.

Before agreeing to hold a Congress, Bismarck had asked each power to send representatives ad referendum.¹² As a result, the top statesmen of Europe gathered at Berlin.

Count Andrassy, Baron de Haymerle and Count Karyoli represented Austria-Hungary. Of the three Count Andrassy was the major spokesman. Tall, with a massive head and upturned moustache, he was the ideal of a great Magyar magnate.¹³ On formal occasions he appeared in a magnificent scarlet cloak. However, he was more than just a nice-appearing Hungarian, he was experienced in the field of international politics and knew the political life of London and Paris.¹⁴ Armed with the Reichstadt agreement he went into the Congress for a clear-cut purpose--setting aside the Treaty of San Stefano.

M. Waddington was the chief French delegate. He had been educated in England and held the distinction of being the only member of the Congress to ever be on a rowing team. He was a classical scholar and later wrote a book on Greek Archaeology. He impressed all who met him by honesty and good sense.¹⁵ However, he had been described as being "quite ignorant of foreign affairs and likely to take unexpected steps."¹⁶ The major concern facing

¹¹ Lewin, The German Road. p. 129.

¹² By this Bismarck asked for ministers of cabinet rank empowered with the authority to make what ever decisions necessary.

¹³ Lewin, The German Road. p. 131.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁶ As quoted in: Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 444.

Waddington was that the African question must not be raised at the Congress. France with interests in Morocco and eyeing Tunis did not want Africa parcelled by an international congress. Two other French delegates were sent to the Congress, M. de St. Vallier and Desprez. However, both played subordinate roles to Waddington.

Count Corti was the Italian representative. He may best be described as a professional diplomat, and belonged to the best type of European permanent official.¹⁷ His colleague was Count Launay, a man of more social ambitions than ability. Corti was forced to play a negative role in the Congress due to Italy's recent admission as a great power and her fluid Balkan policy.¹⁸

Turkey was represented by Sadullah Pasha, Mehmed Ali Pasha and Caratheodory Pasha. Of the three the last played the significant role. He was a man of high culture and intelligence but lacked authority and backbone. Lord Salisbury best described him by stating, "he was a poor, weak, frightened creature, and when not frightened, not wholly trustworthy."¹⁹ Bismarck regarded the Turks with scorn. Turkey, whose existence and whose territories were in question, should be treated as vanquished.²⁰ The Turks, feeling themselves left out of major issues, protested, but as soon as they did the wrath of the Imperial Chancellor soon descended upon them.²¹

¹⁷Mowat, Concert of Europe. p. 66.

¹⁸Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 444.

¹⁹As quoted in: Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 444.

²⁰Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 348.

²¹Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 445.

Russia was represented by Count Schuvalov and Prince Gorchakov. Between the two considerable rivalry existed. Schuvalov was climbing to challenge the master of Russia's foreign policy and vain Gorchakov resented it. However, at the Congress it was Gorchakov who gained most of the headlines and took part in the most controversial questions. However, many felt that the real holder of Russian plenary powers was Count Schuvalov.²² The Congress of Berlin posed a last opportunity for Gorchakov to end his diplomatic career in a blaze of glory. This is pointed out by a statement he made prior to the Congress, he "did not wish to take leave of public life like a snuffed-out candle, but like the sun whose last rays shed dazzling radiance over the landscape."²³

The Congress of Berlin had provided him with that chance. However, Gorchakov was now eighty years old, ill and tottering.²⁴ Lord Salisbury drew the following opinion of him: "Prince Gorchakov was a little, insignificant old man--full of compliments--but otherwise having lost his head."²⁵ Again he makes his views known by saying, "there is no doubt the presence of Gorchakov materially complicates matters and that if some kindly fit of gout would take him off we would move much faster."²⁶ However brilliant he might have been at one time in his life, this was not reflected at the Congress. He was present at the settings of the Congress only at long intervals,

²²Butler, Bismarck. p. 336.

²³As quoted in: Andrassy, Bismarck, Andrassy and their Successors. p. 17.

²⁴Mowat, Concert of Europe. p. 65.

²⁵As quoted in: Cecil, Life of Salisbury. p. 279.

²⁶Ibid., p. 281. Letter from Lord Salisbury to Mr. Gross, June 15, 1878.

usually announcing that some indisposition kept him to his rooms. He still maintained his eloquence at speaking but he tended to constantly generalize. Schuvalov stressed that, "he was incapable of pointing out on a map, even approximately, the different countries of the Balkan peninsula."²⁷ Despite his failures, Gorchakov came to the Congress armed with a desire to pose as a saviour for Russia and possibly gain more from the Congress than he could from England alone.²⁸ He felt that possibly, some mutual suspicion might keep Austria and England apart, and enable the Russians to isolate one of the two and drive a hard bargain with the other.²⁹

Disraeli, Lord Salisbury and Lord Odo Russell represented England at the Congress. The most important role was played by Benjamin Disraeli, the Earl of Beaconsfield. He posed just as striking a figure as Bismarck of Germany and Gorchakov of Russia. He came to the Congress with the prestige of the statesman who had determined the basis on which the Congress would assemble. He had made it clear that rather than accept Russia's Eastern settlement, England was in last resort, prepared to fight.³⁰ Disraeli, like Gorchakov, was not in the best of health. He was in his seventies, walked with a cane and was hard of hearing. During the Congress he was hampered with gout and a severe cough. Likewise, he was handicapped by an inability to use French.

At first Bismarck was suspicious of Disraeli but after dealing with him made this statement, "Der Alte Jude, das ist der Mann." (That old Jew,

²⁷ Lanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 352.

²⁸ Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 441.

²⁹ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 6.

³⁰ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV. 312.

that is the Man.)³¹ The meaning implied by Bismarck is that Disraeli gets things done. Bismarck developed a growing respect for Disraeli's wit, his energy, his defiance of physical disabilities, and he knew that power lay in his hands.³² About Disraeli Bismarck said:

He spent several evenings with us. Since he was not well he would come when there were no other guests. Thus I became intimate with him. Although he had written such fanciful novels, he was a man with whom it was easy to do business. Within one quarter of an hour one knew exactly what he would be at.³³

Disraeli's crucial dealings in the Congress centered around Gorchakov. They developed a rivalry similar to chess partners. It was devoted, sedate, and good-humoured, each straining resolutely for his own hand but always with perfect loyalty to the rules of the game.³⁴ After sessions of the Congress were over, it was a common sight to see Disraeli, tall and graceful, but himself a little shaky with his seventy years and bad cough, giving his arm to the still more aged Gorchakov down the steps of the German Foreign Office.³⁵ Most of the work at the Congress was done by Salisbury. Disraeli attempted to save himself for the more important decisions at hand.

Bismarck, Prince Hohenlohe and Prince von Bülow represented Germany. Needless to say, Prince Bismarck was the major German spokesman. In reality it was not "Der Alte Jude" (Beaconsfield) but "Der Alte Junker" (Bismarck) that was the guiding figure at the Congress.³⁶

³¹As quoted in: Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 311.

³²Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 439.

³³As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 519.

³⁴Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 139.

³⁵Mowat, Concert of Europe. p. 65.

³⁶Robertson, Bismarck. p. 340.

The Berlin Congress stressed well the growth and influence of the German government. In the Peace Conference of 1856, Prussia had kindly been given the vacant chair. The diplomatic salute which had been taken by Napoleon III in 1856 was now taken by Bismarck. Germany's position had changed in Europe. ³⁷

The Congress was a show piece for Bismarck's personality. His vast reputation and achievements would have made him, in any circumstances, the outstanding personality, but the position of President gave him additional prestige which he exploited to the fullest. ³⁸ He gave the great statesmen of Europe a taste of the rough jovial manner with which he entertained German politicians at his beer evenings. He even appeared at the early sessions in a beard, and shaved it off only for the portrait which concluded the Congress. Protocol was ignored; everything was subordinated to punctual and enormous meals. ³⁹

Bismarck's health was not at its best. He was ill and could only join the meetings by a strong effort of will. On the subject of his health at the Congress, Bismarck said:

I rarely got to sleep before six in the morning; often not until eight, and then only for an hour or two. I would not receive anyone before noon. You can imagine what state of mind I was in by the time the settings opened. Before each setting I drank three or four glasses of strong port wine, in order to set my blood coursing, for otherwise I should have been fit for nothing. ⁴⁰

As a result, he was often hurried and exacting of the delegates of the

³⁷ Ibid., p. 340.

³⁸ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 36.

³⁹ Taylor, Bismarck. p. 177.

⁴⁰ As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 519.

Congress.⁴¹ At private sessions he could be seen striding up and down exclaiming, "Gentleman, settle, settle, I insist--or tomorrow I go to Kissingen."⁴² The excuse for his impatience at the Congress was that he wanted to escape the Berlin heat and to start a cure at Kissingen.⁴³ Yet, at the meals it was common to see him stuffing shrimps into his mouth with one hand and cherries with the other.⁴⁴

There was another reason for this haste. The Congress met under the shadow of the assassination attempt of Hodel and Nobiling.⁴⁵ The Emperor William was still too ill from the wounds inflicted upon him to entertain the delegates. This task fell on Prince Bismarck. Fearing an attempt on his life, he made himself almost a prisoner in his own home at a moment when the diplomatic world was at his call. He left most of the entertaining to subordinates. It is said he always had two revolvers on his writing table, and carried a revolver even when he walked in the garden.⁴⁶ He was anxious to leave the charged atmosphere of Berlin for the quiet surroundings of Kissingen.

The Iron Chancellor became the master of the Congress and ruled it with an iron hand. He could make the statement similiar to Louis XIV of France,

⁴¹ Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 347.

⁴² As quoted in: Robertson, Bismarck. p. 347.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 347.

⁴⁴ Taylor, Bismarck. p. 177.

⁴⁵ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 37. Hodel and Nobiling unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate the Emperor William. However, Nobiling seriously wounded him.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

Le Congres, c'est moi. (The Congress, it is I) ⁴⁷ The statesmen of the congress were aware of this as can be gathered by these statements. First, Count Schuvalov of Russia said: "Prince Bismarck presided over the Congress with a certain military brusqueness of manner which did not please those present and which the representatives of all the powers took in good part." ⁴⁸

Lord Salisbury expressed the same viewpoint in a letter to Lady Salisbury, June 23, 1878: "Bismarck is decidedly losing his temper. He never loses an opportunity of informing us that he does not care two straws for the Turkish question and objects to considering any question which is not a question of peace and war." ⁴⁹

Lord Beaconsfield also describes the President of the Congress: "Bismarck scars overall. He is six feet, four inches, proportionately stout, with a sweet and gentle voice, and with a peculiarly refined enunciation which singularly and strangely contrasts with the awful things he says." ⁵⁰

Prince Gorchakov, more than anyone, voiced displeasure with Bismarck's handling of the Congress. To one who had attended the Conference of 1856 as Gorchakov had done, Bismarck's actions were disgraceful. He said, "Prince Bismarck is a very bad President. As he had no experience of Congresses, and

⁴⁷ As quoted in: Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 366. Louis XIV of France made this statement, La Stat. c'est moi, meaning, The State, it is I.

⁴⁸ As quoted in: Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 347.

⁴⁹ Cecil, Life of Salisbury. p. 287. Lord Salisbury to Lady Salisbury, June 24, 1878.

⁵⁰ Monypenny and Buckle, Disraeli. IV, p. 329. Lord Beaconsfield to Lady Bradford, Berlin, June 26, 1878.

conducts business as if it were a Parliament." ⁵¹

The Turkish delegates were not treated kindly by Bismarck. This is evident when Caratheodory Pasha declared long after the Congress was over: "The Congress of Berlin was completely dominated by Prince Bismarck. Circumstance gave the Prince a position as unparalleled in Germany as in Europe...The confidence and fear he inspired were general." ⁵²

On the other hand, the President developed opinions of the delegates, some of them unfavorable. His contempt for Gorchakov was clearly evident throughout the Congress. Not once did he show the Russian Chancellor any courtesy. At one time he even insulted him by letting a Turkish delegate speak in priority to Gorchakov. ⁵³ What dealings the Chancellor had with Russia were done through Schuvalov.

It has already been mentioned that Bismarck regarded Disraeli favorably. The other English delegates did not enjoy this distinction. About Lord Odo Russell he said, "I detect a hidden flaw in Russell for no Englishman can be so perfect as he seems, and he is a man who speaks all languages incredibly well. ⁵⁴ Lord Salisbury was not regarded too highly by Bismarck. He said, "I would like to have him in the hands of a German drill sergeant for half an hour a day, to teach him to hold himself better." ⁵⁵ About Count Corti if Italy, Bismarck drew a favorable opinion. He said, "that is a very

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 328. Lord Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria, London, June 23, 1878.

⁵² As quoted in: Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 347.

⁵³ Lewin, The German Road. p. 141.

⁵⁴ As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 519.

⁵⁵ As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 519.

sensible little man; he must be treated well." ⁵⁶

Of all the delegates attending the Congress, Bismarck rated the Turks the lowest. He regarded them with scorn and distrust. In his first conversation with them on June 14, he said bluntly:

They were greatly mistaken if they imagined that the Congress had met in Turkey's interest. Do not imagine that anything but disaster could come to the Sultan from the break up of the Congress. The Treaty of San Stefano had left him an independant sovereign, and its terms might even be modified at Berlin, but if the Congress failed, war would follow. ⁵⁷

Nevertheless, Bismarck understood how to disregard everything superfluous, disturbing, or time wasting. All members of the Congress agreed that the comparatively speedy procedure and finish were due to the supreme authority and personality of Prince Bismarck. ⁵⁸ Although ill and restless, the Iron Chancellor exerted enormous energy in guiding the Congress.

Prince Bismarck also had his motives. They were to use the Congress to prevent an outbreak of war. He stated: "I am not interested in the fate of 'the people down there.' We are not here to consider the happiness of Bulgarians but to secure the peace of Europe." ⁵⁹

Bismarck was extremely cautious. ⁶⁰ He was so determined to emphasize his country's impartiality that he is said to have prefixed almost every statement at the Congress with the words, "L'Allemagne, qui n' est lice par

⁵⁶ As quoted in: Chrystal, The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 208.

⁵⁷ As quoted in: Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 47.

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Dunlap, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1932), p. 450.

⁵⁹ As quoted in: Chrystal, The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 214.

⁶⁰ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 37.

aucun interet direct dans les affaires d'Orient.⁶¹ (Germany had no direct interests in the affairs of the East.) It was essential for Bismarck that the Congress did not break down under his presidency. At the opening the British and Russians were still far apart, and Disraeli's attitude highly alarmed him. When he was asked if the chance for peace was good, he worriedly answered, "the odds in favor of peace are 66-34 or perhaps 70-30."⁶² He arranged for private negotiations and also that the Germans should avoid being deeply committed on the crucial difficulties.⁶³ He left them to the British, Russians and Austrians, himself only intervening to prevent a deadlock.

As mentioned earlier, Bismarck posed as the defender of Russia. He would side with her on details and on points that had little bearing on the Congress knowing that she would be outnumbered by Austria and England. He was also determined that Germany was not involved in any decision for which she could be blamed. An example of this is provided in the meeting of June 22. Here, the Congress discussed the boundaries of East Roumelia. Britain proposed that it should be placed under the direct political and military authority of the Sultan. He should have the right to fortify and maintain troops along these boundaries. The Russians immediately put forward reservations. Andrassy sided with the British and a condition for a dispute arose. Bismarck studiously conciliatory towards Russia, proposed that Waddington of France be selected to find a formula which could meet Russian

⁶¹ As quoted in: Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 37.

⁶² As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 520.

⁶³ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 38.

objections. After two days work he presented a plan to the Congress that was voted on and accepted. Thus Bismarck had carefully avoided a decision or discussion that could have involved Germany.⁶⁴

The first meeting of the Congress took place at two o'clock Thursday June 13, 1878. As the members entered Radziwill Palace they were escorted to a buffet where they drank port and ate biscuits.⁶⁵ Shortly after, a move was made into the grand ball room where the settings were to be held. Prince Bismarck then made the opening speech of the Congress: "The object for which the Congress was assembled, was to submit the work of San Stefano to the free discussion of the governments which signed the Treaties of 1856 and 1871."⁶⁶

Count Andrassy then rose and proposed the election of Prince Bismarck as President. He then made proposals as regards the Secretary and Recorder. All were accepted. Prince von Hohenlohe then introduced the personnel.⁶⁷

Bismarck then proceeded with the business at hand. As agreed upon in an earlier meeting, the most important questions facing the Congress were discussed first.⁶⁸ Bismarck feared that if the Treaty of San Stefano was discussed article by article much time would be wasted and nothing accomplished. Therefore, the first item of business was Bulgaria. It was

⁶⁴ Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 524.

⁶⁵ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 313.

⁶⁶ As quoted in: Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 313.

⁶⁷ British State Papers. Vol. LXIX, p. 866. Protocol Number 1, June 13, 1878.

⁶⁸ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. p. 315. Lord Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria, Berlin, June 12, 1878.

felt that if this could be settled, the remaining points would fall into place.

The article creating a Greater Bulgaria, Article VI of the Treaty of San Stefano, was placed before the group, but no discussion was undertaken. ⁶⁹ A four day recess was called so that each nation could formulate its own Bulgarian policy. Then, after Beaconsfield stressed the withdrawal of the Russian army from the area around Constantinople, and Schuvalov's immediate refusal, the Congress adjourned to a state banquet at 6:45. ⁷⁰

The second meeting was called Monday June 17. The sixth article of the Treaty of San Stefano was then read. ⁷¹ To it, the English offered two resolutions: (1) That the chain of the Balkans should be the new frontier of Turkey. (2) That in the country South of the Balkans, the Sultan should exercise a real political and military power. ⁷² Russia immediately refused both propositions. They favored a longitudinal line rather than the Balkan line, and that the Turkish troops should not be permitted to enter the province which the Russians called South Bulgaria. ⁷³ After this opening debate, the Prince adjourned the Congress until Wednesday.

What happened during this recess was a typical method by which business was conducted. ⁷⁴ If a serious problem would present itself, Bismarck would

⁶⁹ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 45.

⁷⁰ Chrystal, The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 214.

⁷¹ British State Papers, p. 866. Protocol Number 2, June 17, 1878.

⁷² Ibid., p. 866.

⁷³ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 322.

⁷⁴ Walter G. Wirthuein, Britain and the Balkan Crises. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), p. 390.

call a recess, bundle the interested parties into private chambers, where they would solve the problem. ⁷⁵

On June 18, a conference was held between Count Schuvalov and Baron d'Oubril, Count Andrassy and Baron de Haymerle and Lords Salisbury and Beaconsfield, the purpose being to discuss the Bulgarian situation. Here, Schuvalov announced that he accepted the Balkan line, but the second resolution was so serious that he must refer to the Emperor. ⁷⁶ On June 19, the Congress met again but took no action as Schuvalov was still waiting for the Emperor. On the twentieth, another meeting took place between the ministers of Austria, England and Russia. Beaconsfield stated at this conference that if his views were not met he would leave the Congress. ⁷⁷

This was the crucial moment of the Congress. If Russia did not give in, Beaconsfield threatened to return to England where a declaration of war would soon follow. Beaconsfield was not bluffing. In fact, he had even gone so far as to order his secretary, Lord Rowton to telegraph for a special train to take them from Berlin if the Russians did not surrender. ⁷⁸ Many observers felt that war was certain.

On Friday June 21, Beaconsfield was invited to dine with Bismarck. After their meal Bismarck asked Beaconsfield's intentions in regard to the Bulgarian situation. Here Bismarck was told that the ultimatum to Russia

⁷⁵ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 322.

⁷⁶ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 54.

⁷⁷ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 323.

⁷⁸ A. N. Cumming, "The Secret History of the Treaty of Berlin--A Talk with the Late Lord Rowton." The 19th Century. Vol. LVIII. (New York: Leonard Scott Publication Co., July-December, 1905), 91.

was not a sham.⁷⁹ Bismarck then lost no time impressing upon the Russian delegates the need for a timely retreat.⁸⁰ On the morning of June 22, Russia surrendered to English demands. Prince Gorchakov, who had remained aloof from the negotiations over Bulgaria stated: "We have sacrificed 100,000 picked soldiers and 100 millions of money for an illusion."⁸¹ Bismarck said to Beaconsfield: "You have made a present to the Sultan of 4,000 square miles of the richest soil. There is again a Turkey in Europe."⁸²

This agreement then became part of the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin. It provided that Bulgaria should be cut in two, exclusive of Macedonia, which was disregarded in the new arrangement. The northern, and larger, portion was to be an autonomous principality, tributary to Turkey, bounded by the Danube, the Black Sea (with an outlet at Varna), the Balkans, and the frontiers of Serbia, its ruler to be freely elected by the population and confirmed by the Porte, with the consent of the powers. South of the Balkans, the province of Eastern Roumelia was to be formed, with administrative autonomy but subject to the political and military authority of the Sultan.⁸³

To this Caretheodoy Pasha timidly protested but was soon reduced to silence by Bismarck who warned that after signing the Treaty of San Stefano,

⁷⁹ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 64.

⁸⁰ Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 449.

⁸¹ As quoted in: Monypenny and Buckle, Disraeli. IV, p. 325.

⁸² As quoted in: Monypenny and Buckle, Disraeli. IV, p. 325.

⁸³ Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 140.

Turkey had no right to raise objections. ⁸⁴

Gorchakov up until this time had not been attending sessions because of his ill health. ⁸⁵ However, when the agreement was announced publically, he appeared before the body and presented this statement:

During the last session from which I have been absent, my colleagues had conceded in Russia's name, more than was intended they should...I understand the loyal feelings of my colleagues too well to raise any objection to the concessions they had felt it their duty to make...Russia wished to show the world that she willingly exchanged laurels of victory gained at the cost of so much precious blood for the palm of peace. ⁸⁶

Here was a good example of Bismarck using his influence to prevent the war he so desperately feared. Convinced that Beaconsfield's ultimatum was real and aware of the Czar's unwillingness for war, he advised the Russian delegates of the necessity for compromise.

After the Bulgarian question seemed safely out of the way, Bismarck felt that the tempo of the Congress should be quickened. He presented a definite program for its future work, and decreed all detailed discussions of frontiers should be referred to a boundary committee. ⁸⁷

The next important incident in the Congress took place June 28. The English Plenipotentiary, Lord Salisbury proposed, "that the powers should entrust Austria-Hungary with a mandate for the occupation of Bosnia-
⁸⁸ Herzegovina." Thus proceedings were undertaken for the finest conquest of

⁸⁴ Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 449.

⁸⁵ British State Papers. Vol. LXIX, p. 867. Protocol Number 4, June 22, 1878.

⁸⁶ As quoted in: Dunlap, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow. p. 445.

⁸⁷ Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. p. 529.

⁸⁸ As quoted in: Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 451.

the whole campaign. Austria-Hungary, with no outlay of gold or life had gained a country of great strategic importance on the highway to Salonika. ⁸⁹

Andrassy's desire in the Congress was to gain these two states. The method he used to acquire them is interesting. He stated:

It was useful for our prestige that our occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina should not be an ordinary act of conquest or of an agreement with Russia, but the result of a mandate originating in the confidence and consensus of opinion of Europe, entrusted to us in the interests of civilization and humanity. ⁹⁰

In order to secure this Andrassy had to get someone to recommend that the mandate be established. ⁹¹ Bismarck offered to but Andrassy refused. He feared that public opinion at home should accuse him of undue subservience to the victor of Königgrätz. ⁹² The offer must come from London. When approached, the English readily agreed to endorse this as a proposal in the Congress. As a result Lord Salisbury made the proposal June 28. In the session Andrassy opened proceedings by stating:

Austria-Hungary has had to receive more than 15,000 Bosnian fugitives, who obstinately refused to return home as long as their country was under Turkish rule, since the Turks neither gave them protection nor any means of making a livelihood...I do not demand that Bosnia should be annexed by Austria-Hungary. I only urge the Congress to make some decision. ⁹³

To this Lord Salisbury made the mandate proposal. To this he further stated: "the Porte would give evidence of the greatest wisdom in refusing

⁸⁹ Lewin, The German Road. p. 143.

⁹⁰ As quoted in: Andrassy, Bismarck, Andrassy and Their Successors. p. 31.

⁹¹ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 38.

⁹² As quoted in: Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 431.

⁹³ Dunlap, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow. p. 446.

longer to undertake a task that is beyond her strength; and in entrusting it to a power able to fulfill it, she would avert all the formidable dangers from the Empire." ⁹⁴

Bismarck supported the proposal and proclaimed:

It is not only an Austria-Hungarian interest, but a general duty ...Germany, who is connected by no direct interests with the matters of the East, is of opinion that only a powerful state, with means at her disposal for crushing all disorder, can therefore establish harmony and assure the welfare of the people. ⁹⁵

Russia did not protest the decision. By the Reichstadt agreement of 1876, this was in accord with Austro-Russian policy. The Turkish delegate made a shy protest but he was quieted by Lord Beaconsfield who said that to protest is a lack of wisdom and of regard for the true interests which marked the policy of the Turkish government. ⁹⁶

In article twenty-five, this mandate was incorporated into the Treaty of Berlin. It provided for Austria to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina, subject to Turkish suzerainty. The Sandjak of Novi-Bazar should not be divided between Serbia and Montenegro but be garrisoned by Austria, in accordance with her wish, without prejudice to Turkish sovereignty. ⁹⁷

After this second major agreement the Congress moved into the Greek question. ⁹⁸ In the session of June 29, it was settled. ⁹⁹ The Greeks

⁹⁴ Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 362.

⁹⁵ As quoted in: Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 362.

⁹⁶ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 333.

⁹⁷ Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 140.

⁹⁸ British State Papers. Vol. LXIX, p. 874. Protocol Number 9, June 29, 1878.

⁹⁹ Dunlap, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow. p. 447.

based their pretensions on the theory that the business which the powers had undertaken was to partition the Turkish Empire. Therefore, because of Greek neutrality during the past three years, they had a legitimate and sizeable claim. France and Italy moved that a frontier rectification take place on behalf of Greece.¹⁰⁰ However, no other encouragement was given to these suggestions; and Greece had to settle for a promised extension of her frontiers in Thessaly and Epirus. She was also informed that "States, like individuals, which have a future are in a position to be able to wait."¹⁰¹

During the early days of July the Serbian, Montenegrin and Roumanian questions were settled. All three principalities were declared independent of the Porte in accordance with the Treaty of San Stefano. In the three newly independent states equality of all religions was enjoined by a French demand. This was supported by Prince Bismarck. He pointed to the German Constitution and declared that German public opinion demanded that the principle of equality for all religious faiths which prevailed in Germany should be applied also to Germany's foreign policy. By this settlement, the newly independent states were also awarded territory. Serbia was given Mis, Montenegro, Podgoritza and Antivair.¹⁰²

The main discussion over the smaller powers centered around Roumania. She had fought on the side of the Russians during the war but for the size of reward received, she might as well have resisted the Russians. Roumania was forced to give up Bessarabia to Russia in return for an area known as

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 447.

¹⁰¹ As quoted in: Lewin, The German Road. p. 144.

¹⁰² Dunlap, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow. p. 448.

Dobrudja, a tract of land from Silistria to Mangolia, on the Black Sea, and
 the Snake Isle. ¹⁰³

The Roumanian delegates, M. M. Brantiano and Kogalniceano, were not allowed to share in the work of the Congress. They were merely heard by the representatives of the powers. They presented a memoir, but it was known in advance that this was sheer waste of energy and that the position of the powers had already been taken. ¹⁰⁴

Prince Bismarck vigorously supported the Russian demand for Bessarabia. He even insisted that negotiations upon this point be accelerated. He hoped the Danube Principalities would be content with the recognition of their independence. ¹⁰⁵

The next and final crisis in the Congress came over the port city of Batum and the frontier line of Asiatic Turkey. ¹⁰⁶ By the Treaty of San Stefano, Turkey had given to Russia the territories of Ardahan, Kars and Batum. ¹⁰⁷ By the Salisbury-Schuvalov agreement the territory of Bayazid and the Valley of Alaskherd were restored to Turkey. Thus, the important commercial route to India by the sources of the Euphrates remained in Turkish hands. ¹⁰⁸ In return, England agreed "not to contest the desire of the Emperor of Russia to occupy the port of Batum." ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 448.

¹⁰⁴ Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 367.

¹⁰⁵ Dunlap, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow. p. 448.

¹⁰⁶ British State Papers, p. 881. Protocol Number 16, July 9, 1878.

¹⁰⁷ Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 369.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 369.

¹⁰⁹ As quoted in: Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 336.

At the Congress, England hoped to secure some limitations on Russian occupation of Batum and a favorable frontier line that would provide Turkey with a line of defense against Russia. Count Schuvalov defended the Salisbury-Schuvalov agreement, and was determined no change was to be made. However, the matter was taken out of his hands when Prince Gorchakov announced that he would settle the matter directly with Lord Beaconsfield. ¹¹⁰

Lord Beaconsfield and Prince Gorchakov met twice. One meeting was held July 6, the other on July ninth. Here it was agreed that Batum would be a free and commercial port. ¹¹¹ However, a misunderstanding occurred in the Congress over the proposed Asiatic frontier.

The Russian General Staff had prepared a map of the disputed area. One showed the frontiers most desired by Russia, the other was the one they would settle for only as a matter of last resort. This map was taken by Gorchakov to a meeting with Beaconsfield. The next day at a meeting of the Congress Prince Bismarck ordered Beaconsfield and Gorchakov to set side by side at the table with the various maps before them. Gorchakov's map contained only the line of San Stefano while Beaconsfield's map contained the least desirable line the Russians had declared. Gorchakov exclaimed, "it is treason; they have the map of our staff." This was the end of the discussion. The matter was left to a committee of Schuvalov, Salisbury and Hohenlohe. ¹¹² The issue was finally settled on July 10. Prince Hohenlohe

¹¹⁰ Cecil, Life of Salisbury. p. 293. Lord Salisbury to Mr. Cross, July 10, 1878.

¹¹¹ Molyneux and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 338. Lord Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria, July 6, 1878.

¹¹² As quoted in: Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 455.

reported: "After a long search we found a small piece which we could take away from the Russians; some mountain ridges out of which the line of conciliation was accepted." ¹¹³

This ended the major decisions that had to be reached and the major work of the Congress. According to Bismarck's plan, when all of the great questions were settled, and a treaty executed to that effort, the little questions could be decided by local commissions consisting of the resident ¹¹⁴ ambassadors and some experts.

As the Congress neared its end news of the Anglo-Turkish agreement in which Britain was ceded Cyprus, appeared before the Congress. Lord Salisbury had before-hand notified the interested powers and Bismarck's work increased frantically to see that business was done so that he could leave for Kissingen. ¹¹⁵

On July 13, the treaty was ready for the signature of the delegates. ¹¹⁶ The ceremonies began at two o'clock although the treaty was not signed until four. The members of the Congress, attacke's and secretaries, all in uniform, spent the time exchanging signed photographs and discussing the ¹¹⁷ course of the last months' events.

The sitting began with a speech by Bismarck and was broken up when Andrassy expressed the thanks of the meeting to the President. The

¹¹³ As quoted in: Chrystal, The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 231.

¹¹⁴ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. IV, p. 323.

¹¹⁵ Cecil, Life of Salisbury. p. 295.

¹¹⁶ British State Papers. p. 885. Protocol Number 20, July 13, 1878.

¹¹⁷ Chrystal, The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 233.

signing then took place and a concluding speech was given by Bismarck.

I pay tribute to the spirit of conciliation and mutual goodwill which has animated all the Plenipotentiaries. The Congress has deserved well of Europe. If it has been impossible to fulfill all the aspirations of public opinion, history will, at all events, do justice to our intentions and to our work. ¹¹⁸

That night a great state dinner was held. Here the Crown Prince Frederick III made a farewell speech:

...The work of peace so earnestly desired by Europe is the crown of your efforts. I am happy to do honour to the wisdom and the spirit of reconciliation which had brought about this happy result. The agreements which have been accomplished will be a new pledge for peace and general well-being. ¹¹⁹

The next morning the Plenipotentiaries left Berlin for their respective countries. Bismarck quietly left for Kissingen. Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury left for England where they could announce their "Peace with Honour." The Turks dejectedly went back to their homeland as did the Italians. Prince Gorchakov, in weak health, left for Russia where he was warmly received by Czar Alexander II at Tsarshoe Selo. The French delegate left for France with some thought of her colonial future and ¹²⁰ Andrassy departed feeling as one of the victors of the Congress.

The Treaty of Berlin must be claimed as a victory for Anglo-Austrian policy and a severe loss for Russia. Russia entered the Congress a victorious nation. She expected the gains of conquest which would bring her close to her centuries-old dream of an outlet to the Mediterranean Sea. Her disappointment was natural. Prince Gorchakov, in a letter to M de Giers,

¹¹⁸ As quoted in: Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 142.

¹¹⁹ As quoted in: Dunlap, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow. p. 456.

¹²⁰ Hanotaux, Contemporary France. p. 388.

expressed this disappointment:

The Treaty of Peace will be signed tomorrow. I do not envy him (Schuvalov) being the carrier of that sad publication, and I only regret having had to put my signature on such a transaction. I doubt that it has more vitality than the leaves that fall. Moreover, everything depends on the policy that the Emperor will adopt for the future, and if, as in 1856, we return to this system of recueillement. For my part, I admit that I did not expect this page at the conclusion of my physical and political life, which at best, cannot be very far away. All that I ask, is that I have consecrated all my efforts in safeguarding as much as possible, the dignity of the Emperor and Russia. 121

The Berlin Treaty was also a severe blow to the Turks. It was the most disastrous peace since the Treaty of Belgrade in 1718. 122 The loss of territory, and more important, the loss of key defensive areas, marked the end of Turkey's career in Europe. 123

The Treaty of Berlin was hailed by its makers, as a great accomplishment for the sake of humanity. 124 However, one point must be stressed, and that is the treaty was not drafted for humanitarian reasons in order to save the oppressed Christians under Turkish rule. Rather, it was only a temporary settlement based on political expediency.

If the status quo could have been maintained in the Balkans, the provisions as established by the treaty would probably have provided for a long period of peace. However, the Treaty of Berlin was systematically and openly infringed and ignored. Large states and small states, one after the other overrode and evaded stipulations objectionable to them. Within

121 As quoted in: Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 14. Letter, Gorchakov to M de Giers, N. K. G.

122 Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 463.

123 Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 112.

124 A published copy of the treaty may be found in Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. Appendix X, p. 658-669.

seven years Bulgaria violated the treaty and defied the powers by absorbing Eastern Roumelia. A year later, Russia repudiated the conditions under which Batum had been assigned to her. Greece retained far less territory than was desired for her by the Congress, and had to wait forty years for more generous treatment. The Porte made no effort to reform the government of Crete, which resulted in almost constant insurrections. England and France paid total disregard for the reaffirmation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and moved more and more into control of Egypt and Tunis respectively. Finally, in 1908, Austria changed from occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to outright annexation. And eventually, in 1912, the Balkan powers took into their own hands the repartition of European Turkey.¹²⁵ In fact, few of the provisions of the treaty remained in effect for a long period of time.

But, to the interested parties, drafting the peace, it appeared as though they were accomplishing their purpose. To those who feared Russian expansion, the treaty was a justifiable rebuke. To other powers who zealously eyed the Balkans as a fertile field of expansion, the treaty was a reprieve designed to enable them to become an heir to the "sick old man." Those who were for the independence of the Balkan states from their Turkish masters could mark July 13, 1878 as the date upon which their charters of emancipation were signed and sealed.¹²⁶ Finally, to those who looked on the Balkan situation as a prelude to war, the treaty was like the dove of peace.

¹²⁵ Ward and Gooch, British Foreign Policy. p. 142.

¹²⁶ Arthur Ransome Marriott, The Eastern Question. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), p. 305.

CHAPTER VI

"THE DISHONEST BROKER?"

Bismarck had announced that he would serve as the "Honest Broker," and guide the powers through the Congress of Berlin. He would merely be an umpire between England, Austria and Russia. After all, Germany was the only power with no ambitions or interests in the East.¹ It was their place to serve humanity at this crucial time. But was this his true role at the Congress? Did he actually preside as the disinterested President, and was he as aloof in the negotiations preceding the Congress as he pretended to be? These are the questions that must be asked about Bismarck during the years 1876-1873.

Despite his role of the disinterested broker, expecting nothing out of the Congress, Bismarck believed he must participate in order to best protect the interests of Germany because he was firmly convinced that German security was at stake. The gains Russia had made in the Balkans and the international reaction to the Treaty of San Stefano presented Germany with a two-fold threat. One, the peace of Europe was endangered and two, the security of Austria was threatened. Both of these principles were keys to Bismarckian foreign policy.

In order to end this threat to German security, the gains Russia had made by the Treaty of San Stefano had to be set aside. Therefore, in the negotiations preceding the Congress, and in the actual meeting of the powers, Bismarck schemingly and systematically worked to the disadvantage of Russia. The "Honest Broker" worked to save the peace of Europe and to

¹Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 391.

secure the interests of Austria at Russia's expense for the benefit of Germany. In other words, the "Honest Broker" took a slight commission for his work.² Perhaps Bleichroder, one of Bismarck's few close friends, summarized the situation best when upon hearing that Bismarck "would play the honest broker," shook his head thoughtfully, and inspired by age long experience said, "there is no such thing as an honest broker."³

The student of European history might now ask, was not Russia a member of the Dreikaiserbund? Did not Germany owe Russia a debt of gratitude for her neutrality as Germany attacked Austria in 1866 and France in 1870? This does not seem to be policy that Prince Bismarck would ever endorse. The fact is that the Treaty of San Stefano forced Bismarck to reevaluate Germany's position in Europe. The result of this evaluation called for a revision of German foreign policy because of three basic factors: fear of Russian domination in the Balkans, loss of confidence in the Russian alliance, and belief in Austria as the most natural ally.

Bismarck did not want a strong Russia in the Balkans.⁴ He feared the rising tide of the Pan-Slavist movement. This could inundate the whole of Eastern Europe, and force the partitioning of Austria. Germany then isolated would thus be reduced to a dependent position.⁵ On top of this, a French-Russian rapprochement would then become possible. Germany's position would

² As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 515.

³ As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 515.

⁴ Joseph Vincent Fuller, Bismarck's Diplomacy at its Zenith. (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 7.

⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

be that of a second-rate power. Therefore, even though Russia was a member of the Dreikaiserbund and even though her assistance in 1870 had been essential, her interests would have to be sacrificed for German security.

As mentioned above, shortly after the Andrassy note had been sent, Bismarck made secret overtures to England, promising her full support for her Eastern policy and asking nothing in return.⁶ In fact, it appeared as though Bismarck would develop a policy aimed at a quick settlement of the crises.⁷ Then, after the news that Britain would take the lead in opposing Russia was announced, Bismarck withdrew to his policy of nonattachment. This meant that Russia would be checked but that someone other than Germany would do the work.⁸

Bismarck's concern over the value of Germany's alliance with Russia dates to August, 1876. Gorchakov had forced Bismarck to make a choice between supporting Austria or Russia when he asked if Russia went to war with Austria, would Germany remain neutral.⁹ Bismarck realized that if the crisis in the East would lead to a Russian-Austrian quarrel he could not keep on good terms with both of them. He must choose one or the other.¹⁰ He said in his memoirs:

If we remain neutral when Russia and Austria come to blows, the defeated combatant will never forgive us. Should Austria be crushed, that would not profit us. Of course we could annex German Austria,

⁶Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 381.

⁷Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 172.

⁸Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 383.

⁹Butler, Bismarck. p. 234.

¹⁰Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 379.

but what could we do with the Slavs and Hungarians? Public opinion would not allow us to fight against Austria; Russia would be a grave menace to us if Austria were to perish; we can hold Russia in check only with Austria's aid. ¹¹

The choice between the two was a decision of great importance to Bismarck. He attempted to sound Gorchakov as to how far Russia would go with Germany. He asked that in return for the assistance of Germany in the East, would Russia guarantee to Germany the possession of Alsace-Lorraine. ¹² This would be a monumental guarantee for Germany. The territory won from France in the Franco-Prussian War would have the promised protection of Russia. Germany would then be free from worry against a French war of revenge. However, the Russians were silent on the proposal. Bismarck regarded this as a denial. ¹³

Apparently, Bismarck was willing to come to a close understanding with Russia, and to support them in an aggressive policy in the Balkans. However, Bismarck made his price high. German support of Russia in the East would be given only in return for support of German policy against France. This desire was apparent when Bismarck made a second attempt to secure an agreement with Russia. In the latter part of August, 1876, Manteuffel was sent to Russia to suggest a treaty of alliance between Russia and Germany on the terms of freedom of action against France in return for German support of Russia in the Eastern Question. Again, Alexander II refused to entertain the suggestion. ¹⁴ The path was now clear to Bismarck. If the Eastern

¹¹ As quoted in: Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 391.

¹² Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 102.

¹³ Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 100.

problem reached threatening proportions his choice must be Austria. Russian silence to German overtures forced him to regard Austria as the most natural ally. Bismarck maintained that he had honorably put off this choice until he was forced to make it by Russia's threatening conduct after the Congress of Berlin.¹⁵ The fact is that he made his decision in Austria's favor in May 1876 when he supported Austria at the Berlin meeting of the three Emperors, and in October 1876 when he informed Russia he would not allow either party to suffer a decisive defeat in a trial of arms.¹⁶

One thought that kept recurring in Bismarck's mind during the period when he made his decision, was the War Scare of 1875. As mentioned before, the Iron Chancellor was not the man to forget a bad turn and still less a humiliation as he had received from Gorchakov in his own capitol.¹⁷ Bismarck's attitude toward Gorchakov's action is revealed by this statement: "When he chose in 1875 to invent the French scare, climbing on my shoulders in order to pose as peacemaker of Europe, I told him that, though I should continue to value the alliance of Russia, all confidence was at an end between us."¹⁸ This much is certain, the War Scare of 1875 left a deep trace in Bismarck's mind.¹⁹ Russian action in this incident made one other

¹⁵Fuller, Bismarck's Diplomacy. p. 6.

¹⁶Butler, Bismarck. p. 234. On September 23, 1876, a clear response appeared in the Reichsanzeiger, the Empire's public voice. An article announced that German interests were not concerned in the Eastern Question; the Imperial Government intended merely to support the wishes of the two allies and it refused to take a friendly power under its tutelage in regard to the affairs of Turkey. Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 78.

¹⁷Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 379.

¹⁸Butler, Bismarck. p. 230.

¹⁹Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 510.

point very clear to Bismarck. In case of a Franco-German war, Germany could not count upon the moral support or even the inaction of Russia. Friendly as Alexander II was to Germany, it was plainly against the interests of Russia that France should once more be crushed and weakened. The Czar now had shown that he wished to maintain the existence of France as a great power, however inconvenient to Germany.²⁰ On this point Bismarck said:

That for Russian policy there is a limit beyond which the importance of France in Europe must not be decreased is explicable. That limit was reached, as I believe, at the peace of Frankfort--a fact which in 1870 and 71 was not so completely realized by St. Petersburg as five years later. I hardly think that during our war the Russian Cabinet clearly foresaw that, when it was over, Russia would have as a neighbor so strong and consolidated a Germany.²¹

From October 1876, Bismarck realized that the Russian alliance, upon which he had leaned so heavily since the day he first took power, had lost much of its value.²² Germany's future would best be served through a firm understanding with Austria.

As a result of his decision, Bismarck had no intention of supporting Russia in the negotiations preceding the Congress or at the meeting itself.²³ This fact is declared when in October 1876, Bismarck said; "the whole thing is an attempt to make us sign a blank cheque which Russia will fill in, and cash for use against Austria and England."²⁴

Even though Bismarck refused to support Russia he did not want an open

²⁰ Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 65.

²¹ As quoted in: Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 65.

²² Sontag, Germany and England. p. 152.

²³ Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 382.

²⁴ As quoted in: Ludwig, Bismarck. p. 513.

quarrel with her.²⁵ Much care had to be taken not to drive her into the arms of the French. As a result, in his actions in 1877 and 1878, Bismarck did nothing to anger the Russians, with the exception of annoying and

humiliating Gorchakov or an occasional outburst of temper.²⁶ Thus, when a crucial point would develop between the powers, Bismarck would adopt an attitude of lofty neutrality which was only a mask for his support of

Austria.²⁷ Russia, unable to stand alone against Austria and England, was forced to concede at the diplomatic table. Without Germany she was isolated because the Treaty of San Stefano was in conflict with the interests of Austria and England. Of his role at the Congress in regard to Russia, Bismarck said:

In carrying out the decrees of the Congress, Russia expected and required that, in local discussions about them in the East, when there was any difference of opinion between Russian and other interpretations, the German commissions should, on principle support Russia. In many questions the objective decisions might certainly be fairly indifferent to us; therefore, it was only incumbent on us to explain the stipulations honestly, and not to disturb our relations with the other great powers by party support of local questions that did not effect German interests.²⁸

The factor that enabled Bismarck to develop this policy was that Russia was too weak to prolong the war. The conflict had cost Russia two million rubles per day and the losses from casualties and disease were increasing. Even more serious was the revival of nihilism and terrorism inside the country.²⁹ This weakness was evident when the Grand Duke Nicholas refused

²⁵ Butler, Bismarck. p. 379.

²⁶ Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 144.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 144.

²⁸ Butler, Bismarck. p. 379.

²⁹ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 20.

to occupy Constantinople.³⁰ If Russia refused to negotiate the Treaty of San Stefano she would have to face the combined forces of England and Austria. Besides, the Turkish army was still in fighting trim and Roumania, angered by the Russians demanding the secession of Bessarabia, would have joined the conflict.³¹ Bismarck gave evidence of this reasoning when he wrote Andrassy:

If Austria-Hungary is given a free hand against Russia, which she has merited if Russia fails to keep her promise,³² and if Austria-Hungary comes to an agreement with England, Czar Alexander must perceive that the work of his valiant soldiers has been distorted by the exacting rather than skillful behavior of his statesmen.³³

Bismarck gave further evidence in his memoirs. He said:

The desire of the Russian government to arrive at a peace with Turkey by means of a Congress, proved that they did not feel themselves strong enough on the military side to let the matter come to a war with England and Austria; after they had once let slip the opportunity of occupying Constantinople.³⁴

The only Russian salvation would be Bismarck turning against Austria and identifying himself with Russia.³⁵ Bismarck had no intention of doing this.³⁶ In the negotiations preceding the Congress, he refused to support Russian policies on five major decisions.

³⁰ Onau, The Memoirs of Count N. Ignatyev. p. 111.

³¹ Andrassy, Bismarck, Andrassy and their Successors. p. 29.

³² Bismarck made reference to the Treaty of Reichstadt and Russia's disregard of it.

³³ Andrassy, Bismarck, Andrassy and their Successors. p. 30. Prince Bismarck to Count Andrassy, January 30, 1878.

³⁴ Butler, Bismarck. p. 236.

³⁵ Andrassy, Bismarck, Andrassy and their Successors. p. 29.

³⁶ Ramsay, Foreign Policy. p. 387.

First, Bismarck refused to support the program Gorchakov presented at the Berlin Conference held May 11, until May 20, 1876. He backed Andrassy to the point that Russia was forced to yield. In part, fear of a Russian-French rapprochement guided Bismarck. Gorchakov renewed his interest in France with the most ardor he had shown since the War Scare of 1875. He had expressed hope that France should return to a significant role in European affairs and he even suggested a French admiral be given command of a proposed international fleet.³⁷ This fear prompted Bismarck to support the desires of Andrassy even at this early date in the Eastern Question.

Secondly, in October 1876, the question of an armistice between Turkey and the insurgents was raised. Russia proposed a six weeks period while Turkey, with the support of the powers, proposed one for a six months period. Bismarck supported the longer armistice thus knowing that Russia would have to stand alone.

A third incident in which Germany withheld support from Russia was in the proposal for an international fleet to be sent to the Bosphorus, which was mentioned earlier. Bismarck refused, saying, "we have no apparent interest to justify us in mobilizing our sea forces in other parts."³⁸

Bismarck also refused to support Russia in their approach to Germany over what their attitude would be if Austria and Russia were involved in war. Here, Bismarck refused to give the Russians any hint of support. He answered, "they could not allow either of their friends to be

³⁷ Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 375.

³⁸ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 20. Memorandum of Prince Bismarck, October 4, 1876.

hurt by an armed conflict."³⁹

A fifth German refusal to Russian overtures for support occurred in November, 1876. General von Werder, German advisor in St. Petersburg told Bismarck that, "Emperor Alexander II expresses doubt as to whether England would remain quiet in the event of an all-out war. The Emperor trusts in that case, your majesty will exert all influence to dissuade England from taking a hostile attitude."⁴⁰

Bismarck's reply was clearly a rejection of any Russian hope of German aid. He said:

There is no need to explain at length why we cannot conceive the possibility of making war on England for the sake of Russia. There would be no practical object to be gained even in raising it as a threat, for Russia's land frontier on our side would be protected by our neutrality, and if it were admissible that Germany, purely out of sympathy for Russia, might declare war on England, it would react to the disadvantage of Russia, since the harbours of Memel, Stettin and Edrine would be blockaded and the unquestionable superior land forces of Russia could not be reinforced by the German land power.⁴¹

In each of these five points, a flick of Bismarck's finger could have transferred German support so that in each of the five situations Russia could have adopted a more aggressive policy. But, without German support they were forced to accept negotiations. Therefore, in the years preceding the Congress, Bismarck could profess aloofness and in the Congress itself, he could pose as the honest broker, knowing that Russia would have to yield to the English and Austrians. The years 1877 and 1878 and the Berlin Congress were to Bismarck as an historical novel. He started to read it knowing how

³⁹ Butler, Bismarck. p. 234.

⁴⁰ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 34. Memorandum of Prince Bismarck, October 4, 1876.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 34.

the story would turn out.

Nevertheless, Prince Bismarck posed as the defender of Russian interests at the Congress.⁴² He felt it was a way for Russia to surrender the Treaty of San Stefano without losing face.⁴³ After the Congress was over, he even pretended shocked when Russia launched a furious press attack against him.⁴⁴ Here is where Bismarck must be described as being slightly dishonest. He could win Russian friendship by taking their side over details which remained in dispute while knowing that Russia would be forced to give in.

W. N. Medlicott, in his book, The Congress of Berlin and After, lists the areas where Bismarck actually supported Russia at the expense of Austria and England at the Congress of Berlin. Some of the more notable were:

1. As President he used his authority to bully the Turks to Russia's interests.
2. In polite language he vetoed many demands of the Austrians and British.
3. At the first meeting he refused to allow Britain to completely protest Russian troops in the Constantinople area.
4. At the fifth meeting he supported Schuvalov's arguments against a mixed occupation of Christian and Moslem troops in Bulgaria.
5. At the sixth meeting he expressed annoyance over Salisbury's haggling over details of the Bulgarian settlement.
6. At the ninth setting he opposed the hearing of the Roumanians who protested against Russian demands for Bessarabia.
7. In the two serious disputes involving the Bulgarian frontier and Batum, he undertook personally the task of go-between, sounding the British and Austrians, intervening at times on his own initiative with proposals in Russia's interest and giving her repeatedly the support of his ingenuity and authority.
8. As President he was able to accelerate business and prevent departures from the preliminary agreements, and in this way saved the Russians from many adverse decisions on matters of detail to which their isolated position rendered them liable.⁴⁵

⁴² Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 464.

⁴³ Taylor, Bismarck. p. 176.

⁴⁴ Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 467.

⁴⁵ Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin. p. 129.

Bismarck even supported Russia on the few occasions which Russia and Austria came into direct conflict.⁴⁶ He probably calculated that the Austrians were in a better position to suffer and less likely to resent a few diplomatic rebuffs.⁴⁷ This point is raised in a letter written by Lord Elliot to Lord Salisbury in September 1879: "Andrassy told Elliot that Salisbury and all the other plenipotentiaries could bear witness, that the results of the Congress were certainly not due to Prince Bismarck's support, but were wholly attributable to the combined effort and resolutions of England and Austria."⁴⁸

A typical method in which Bismarck provided support for Russia is provided by Benedict Humphrey Sumner in his book, Russia and the Balkans, 1870-1880.

When Gorchakov proposed that the powers develop a collective guarantee for the Treaty of Berlin, Bismarck rejected the idea but announced he was not opposed to an article laying down the right of the powers to control by their representatives in Turkey, the execution of the Treaty. He continued in cautious support of the Russians and, when it came finally to voting upon the modified formula, he was the only one to accept it--knowing that its defeat was certain.⁴⁹

Another example is provided which shows Bismarck's clever handling of Russia. On the seventeenth of June, the setting was opened with the question of admitting Greece and Bulgaria to the Congress.⁵⁰ Bismarck suggested that the proposals be discussed in detail so private meetings between Russia and

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 130.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 130.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 130. Lord Elliot to Lord Salisbury, September 4, 1879.

⁴⁹ Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. p. 553.

⁵⁰ British State Papers. p. 866. Protocol Number 2, June 17, 1878.

Britain were established. Thereupon, Andrassy interposed to demand the presence of the Austrians at the meeting. This was accepted by Bismarck. Thus Bismarck had avoided himself proposing that the Russians should be outnumbered. ⁵¹

One other detail adds evidence to Bismarck's plans. He was careful to impress upon Schuvalov, he could not support the Russians more insistently against the combined opposition of the British and Austrians lest they should disrupt the Congress and leave. ⁵² In public Bismarck gave every appearance of being a well-wisher of Russia. ⁵³ With this type of action Bismarck could claim that he had supported the Russians. He remarked after the Congress, "my conduct at the Congress was such that I thought, after it was over, well, if I had not got long ago the highest Russian order set in precious stones, I ought to get it now." ⁵⁴

Friedrich von Holstein, in his memoirs, gave some insight into this picture. He said, "Prince Bismarck's main intention at the Congress was to teach the Russians a lesson, to make it clear to them that their plans could not be executed without his consent, and that his consent depended on the conduct of the Russian government." ⁵⁵

Therefore, Russia's conduct after 1875 was not sufficient to satisfy Bismarck. As a result, he lost confidence in his alliance with Russia and

⁵¹ Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. p. 519.

⁵² Ibid., p. 512.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 512.

⁵⁴ As quoted in: Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. p. 129.

⁵⁵ Rich and Fischer, The Holstein Papers. p. 117.

in the years prior to the Congress withheld support by playing the role of the neutralist. Then in the Congress he supported Russia on minor details while at the same time, realized that Russia would be forced to give in. Bismarck was not the "Honest Broker" but entered the Congress in order to carry out a clear-cut policy. Russian interests had to be sacrificed for German security.

CHAPTER VII

THE AFTERMATH

When Bismarck left for Kissingen on July 14, 1878, he was satisfied with the outcome of the Congress. He assumed he had pleased everybody. In August he wrote King Ludwig of Bavaria that the danger of a break between Austria and Russia had been averted and that Germany's relations with both remained unimpaired. He constantly upheld the view that he had done a service to a foreign power such as a foreign minister rarely has the chance of doing.¹

In Bismarck's estimation, even Russia, the nation who next to Turkey suffered most by the Treaty of Berlin, had made some gains. Bulgaria, though disunited could hope for new unity, and Russia could hope to enjoy popularity there. By remaining friendly with Bulgaria, Russia could be within striking distance of the Straits. On top of this, there had been a drastic weakening of the Ottoman Empire. She would no longer have to be considered a foreign threat. A letter written by M de Giers to H. G. Jomini, senior advisor to the Foreign Minister, pointed out the Russian attitude while the Congress was in session:

Nekilov is right in telling you that the effort of our plenipotentiaries to bring the work of the Congress to a good result are appreciated here in high circles. The impossibility of obtaining more is recognized and provided that an agreement is reached on the question of Batum, they will be perfectly satisfied--and indeed with reason...the independence of three Principalities, the creation of Bulgaria...no more rajah and so many other things. My God! Would we not have treated as mad anyone who would have dreamed of such a result two years ago? ²

¹ Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 465.

² Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 15. M de Giers to Jomini, St. Petersburg, June 23/July 5, 1878.

By the time the Congress was over, the Russian attitude had changed. The Russian gains were discredited by the more influential element of the Russian Press and public. The Pan-Slavic groups could see only total defeat at the conference table. Ivan S. Aksakov, one of the most influential Russian writers denounced the dismemberment of Greater Bulgaria which to them signified the loss of Russian domination of Constantinople and the Straits area. Equally unforgiveable was the abandonment of the province of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Catholic, German Austria.³ They searched for scapegoats and found two, the Russian ministers, notably Schuvalov, and Prince Bismarck.

Schuvalov bore the brunt of the Russian's failure at the Congress. He was judged as an incompetent dupe of London and Vienna.⁴ This attitude was undoubtedly due to the work of Gorchakov who managed to poison the Czar's mind toward Schuvalov. Gorchakov had left Berlin immediately at the close of the Congress and had been in conference with him. Schuvalov, on the other hand, had made the acquaintance of a too facile lady, from whose arms it was difficult to entice him.⁵ By the time he did get back to the Czar, opinion had been set against him. An account of Schuvalov's first meeting with the Czar is given by a Russian Aide de Camp, Baron von Unger Stunberg;

I was on duty that day when Peter Schuvalov came into the Aide-de-Camp's room with his head held high and highly pleased with himself and desired to be announced to His Majesty. Ten minutes later the audience was over. What a change had passed over him. If the scene had not been so tragic...I should compare Count Peter Schuvalov to a poodle who had a pail of water thrown over it. He was quite besides

³ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

⁵ Dunlap, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow. p. 457.

himself, white as a sheet. With a trembling voice and every sign of agitation, he whispered to me, "I have been very vilely calumniated ...by Gorchakov, that corrupted and malicious old man." ⁶

Schuvalov had defended himself valiantly against the charges of being Bismarck's dupe as Russian public opinion claimed, especially, after seeing the painting of the Congress of Berlin. In this painting Bismarck is shown in the center of the picture shaking Schuvalov's hand. General von Winterfield commented that, "This painted handshake broke Schuvalov's neck." ⁷ Schuvalov had stressed that the Treaty of San Stefano had not been set aside. The major area where it differed was in the partitioning of Bulgaria. He further took the position that Bismarck had supported Russian opinion in the three major crises--the Bulgarian frontier, the fate of Sofia and the cession of Batum. ⁸ Nevertheless, Schuvalov was too late. Public opinion was so against him that he was forced to resign, his political career all but ended. ⁹

At the time of the Treaty of Berlin, Russia was troubled internally. The reforms of Alexander II had been far from successful. Instead of ending the internal problems, the reforms had too often raised false hopes and led to new difficulties. The war had been a tremendous strain on the Russian treasury which was pressed to find new sources of income to meet the increasing cost of government. The disillusionment of the Russians caused many

⁶ Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 464. This painting of the Congress by Anton von Werner, can be seen in Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. p. 500.

⁷ Ibid., p. 464.

⁸ Robertson, Bismarck. p. 342.

⁹ Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 17.

to look for revolutionary and radical solutions of their nation's problems. The increase of underground activity and violence added to the instability of the state.¹⁰ Then, the economic steps Germany had taken against Russian agricultural exports added fuel to the fire. It would be to Russia's interest to direct this discontent to the Treaty of Berlin and to find a scapegoat outside the country. This role was assigned to the Iron Chancellor of Germany, Otto von Bismarck.

In 1879 a full scale press war was launched against Germany. The Russian paper Golos led the attack against Bismarck.¹¹ The Nationalists' party in Russia, aided by the great war of Pan-Slavism, proclaimed that Bismarck had instigated the Russian attack on Turkey, in order to favor Austria and rob Russia of its victory.¹² Czar Alexander, at the August manoeuvres told General von Schweinitz, "In the questions still outstanding from the Congress, Germany everywhere took the side of Austria against Russia. If you want the friendship which has linked us for a hundred years to continue, you should alter this."¹³ He also stated that he intended to write Emperor William I about it. He sent a threatening letter to Germany known as the "Box on the ear letter."¹⁴ The two most important points of this letter were, "If refusal to adapt the German vote to the Russian is adhered to, peace between us cannot last," and, "Your Majesty's Chancellor

¹⁰ Robertson, Bismarck. p. 342.

¹¹ Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 469.

¹² Ibid., p. 469.

¹³ As quoted in: Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 469.

¹⁴ Butler, Bismarck. p. 240.

has forgotten the promises of 1870." ¹⁵ In this letter, Czar Alexander further stated:

I understand perfectly that you are anxious to maintain your good relations with Austria, but I do not understand why it is to the interest of Germany to sacrifice those of Russia. It is worthy of a real statesman to put into the scale a personal quarrel when it is a question of the interests of two great states born to live on good terms with one another, and when one of them rendered the other, in 1870, a service which according to your own words, you said you never would forget... the situation is becoming too serious for me to conceal from you the fears that are harassing me of consequences that might be disastrous to our countries. ¹⁶

This letter was accompanied by a huge build-up of Russian forces and a massing of troops on the Eastern border of Germany. Bismarck gave an estimate of their strength:

They are making immense preparations in Russia, having increased their forces by 400,000 men, as much as the peace footing of the German army. They can now put twenty-four new divisions into the field, that is, twelve army corps. And a mass of cavalry is stationed near the Western frontier which could pour in upon us in three days. ¹⁷

Bismarck pretended to be furious at these reproaches, stating that he had only involved himself in the Eastern Question at all out of very special consideration for the Czar. ¹⁸ In fact, Bismarck regarded the Congress as a device for saving the face of the Russians. They could make to European opinion the concessions which would seem humiliating if made to British and Austrian threats. Even while the Congress was being conducted had not Bismarck sided with Russia over the major issues? ¹⁹ Bismarck placed part

¹⁵ Coolidge, Origins of the Alliance. Czar Alexander to Emperor William I, August, 1879.

¹⁶ Busch, Bismarck. p. 222.

¹⁷ As quoted in: Seton Watson, The Eastern Question. p. 467.

¹⁸ Taylor, Bismarck. p. 176.

¹⁹ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 101.

of the blame for Russia's failure on not having a clear-cut policy. He said, "we could not make demands for Russia, which she had not made herself."²⁰ He also claimed that the one responsible for this Russian policy was Gorchakov. He said, "with this Gorchakov is not carrying on a Russian policy. He always wanted to cut a figure and to be praised by the foreign press, and in particular, the Parisian newspapers."²¹ Then, in his memoirs, Bismarck summarized the danger that would have accompanied Russian support: "In St. Petersburg they expected us to look after their interests unconditionally and to support all of their demands. We could not do that however, as some of them were unfair and dangerous."²²

In retaliation to the Russian charges, Bismarck instructed Busch to answer the Russian charges. An article entitled, "The Gorchakov Policy" then appeared in Number 11 of the Grenzböten.²³ After this the wires between St. Petersburg and Berlin were not broken but made red hot with recriminations.²⁴

The turn of Russian opinion against him, and the Czar's hostile attitude, awoke in Bismarck all of the old fears of Germany isolated and encircled by a hostile coalition. He confessed that he was afflicted by the "nightmare of coalitions."²⁵ This fear was brought out by a statement in his memoirs:

²⁰ Busch, Bismarck. p. 214.

²¹ Ibid., p. 227.

²² Ibid., p. 216.

²³ Robertson, Bismarck. p. 342.

²⁴ Mowat, The Concert of Europe. p. 68.

²⁵ Busch, Bismarck. p. 226.

At the time I was extremely anxious on account of Russia and feared an alliance between her and Austria, which the French would have joined. Lately the Russians had written us brutal letters (The box on the ear letter) threatening us in case we did not support them in the Eastern Question and I thought they could not act that way unless they had Austria as a good friend who might become an ally. They had also endeavoured to bring about an alliance in Paris through Obrutscheff. ²⁶

Once again Bismarck began to search for allies as insurance against a Russian-led coalition. Briefly, he ordered Count Münster to approach England as to what their attitude would be if Germany went to war against ²⁷

Russia. To these German proposals, Lord Beaconsfield replied, "If Russia attacked Germany and Austria, Germany might rely on our being on her side. I said, I suppose the service you want of us would be to influence France and Italy to observe neutrality...I was pretty sure we could prevent any French government from joining Russia against him." ²⁸

After Bismarck received this answer, the matter was dropped just as it had been in 1876. As stated earlier, Bismarck had arrived at the conclusion that Austria would be his choice as an ally. Neither England, Italy nor Russia could offer Germany the advantages that Austria could. This was a choice Bismarck had to make. On the one hand Russia could insure strong traditional family policy and the advantage of stability, but on the other hand Austria could offer racial similarity and many other valuable points. ²⁹ Bismarck was aware of the sound argument for a close understanding with

²⁶ Busch, Bismarck. p. 222.

²⁷ Monypenny and Buckles, Disraeli. II, p. 1361. Lord Beaconsfield to Lord Salisbury, Hatfield, Wednesday, October 15, 1879.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 1361.

²⁹ Harris, A Diplomatic History. p. 78.

Russia. In his memoirs he stated:

In point of material force, I held a union with Russia to have the advantage. I had also been used to regard it as safer, because I placed more reliance on traditional dynastic friendship, on a community of monarchial instincts and the absence of indigenous political divisions, than on the fits and starts of public opinion among the Bulgarians, Slav and Catholic population of the monarchy of the Hapsburgs. ³⁰

However, when all of the facts were weighed, Bismarck selected Austria as the pivotal point of his policy. The actual signing of the Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria took place in August 1879. ³¹ In reality it was dated October 9, 1878. ³² Nevertheless, Bismarck's choice between Austria and Russia was made long before. ³³ Therefore, the interests of Austria were Bismarck's prime concern during the Eastern Crisis.

Bismarck selected Austria as his basic ally for a number of reasons but heading the list was his fear of France and the possibility of Germany facing a hostile coalition. On these points, Austria was more vital to German interests than was Russia. Bismarck declared, "If we sacrificed our relations with all the other powers to the firmness of our alliance with Russia, we should find ourselves with our exposed geographical situation, in a dangerous dependence on Russia in the event of an acute manifestation of a French and Austrian desire for revenge." ³⁴ Again, Bismarck showed that these two points were on his mind when he said:

...if, under the influence of Russian threats, the uncertainty of

³⁰ Butler, Bismarck. p. 258.

³¹ Ibid., p. 260.

³² Fuller, Bismarck's Diplomacy. p. 7.

³³ Ibid., p. 7.

³⁴ Butler, Bismarck. p. 249.

the attachment of Germany, Austria finally seeks an entente cordiale with either France or Russia, Germany would be in danger of entire isolation on the Continent. Supposing however, that Austria were to effect an entente cordiale with France and England as in 1854, Germany, unless prepared for isolation, would be forced to unite with Russia alone, and, as I fear, to follow in the mistaken and perilous course of Russian domestic and foreign policy. 35

The basic fear of Bismarck was that by leaning to Russia he might find himself up against an Austro-Hungarian-English-French alliance, which if not a desperate, would be a dangerous situation.³⁶ When making this choice, Bismarck's distrust of Russia was a very large factor in influencing his decision. He said:

If the German policy confined its possibilities to the Russian alliance, and, in accordance with the wishes of Russia, refused all other states, Germany would with regard to Russia be in an unequal position because the geographical position and the autocratic constitution of Russia makes it easier for her to give up the alliance than it would be for us...and a Russo-German alliance depends upon the mood of the reigning Emperor of Russia. 37

Another factor influenced Bismarck in his choice, and that was that Germany had more in common with Austria. On this subject he said, "The sensible portion of the 42,000,000 Germans would prefer to have a good understanding with both Russia and Austria. But if one is obliged to choose between them, everything points to Austria, national reasons and others."³⁸ Finally, Bismarck did not hesitate to pick Austria. Together the two countries would be strong militarily. On this subject Bismarck said:

Russia is strong enough alone and we cannot be of much assistance

³⁵ Ibid., p. 264.

³⁶ Andrassy, Bismarck, Andrassy and their Successors. p. 30.

³⁷ Busch, Bismarck. p. 228.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 223.

to her. Austria is the weaker of the two, although at the same time a valuable ally, and we can be of assistance to her. She can also strengthen our policy of peace. When we are united, with our two million soldiers back to back, they with their Nihilism will doubtless think twice before they disturb the peace. ³⁹

The advantages to be gained from an alliance with Austria over Russia could be summarized as follows: With Austria there was more of a community of interests, at least with the Magyars and Germans, and with the latter there was a community of blood; up until this time Russia had always been friendly, and she might still be won back, whereas any break with Austria would reopen the wound of 1866, perhaps so unrepairably as to throw them back into the arms of the French; and Germany would be the senior partner in an Austro-German alliance, whereas in a Russo-German alliance, the Slavs might hold the whip hand, particularly if the Austrians were on the other side. Then, as far as the status quo of Europe was concerned, an alliance with Austria opened the possibilities of an alliance with England, which would be precluded by an alliance with Russia. Bismarck also felt he must act quickly in securing an Austro-German alliance, because there was an impending change in the Austrian ministry, which Bismarck feared might result in an alliance between Austria and Russia to the exclusion of Germany. Finally, 1879 found Austria as the more stable of the two powers. German security would be best served through an alliance with Austria.

The German Chancellor then instigated negotiations with Count Andrassy of Austria. The two met at Gastein August 27-28, 1879, in order to formulate the treaty. ⁴⁰ However, all Germany was not in favor of breaking so

³⁹ Ibid., p. 228.

⁴⁰ Butler, Bismarck. p. 260.

completely with Russia in favor of Austria. Prince Hohenlohe expressed his views when he declared, "I do not trust Austria nor do I regard Russia as seriously hostile. Lastly, I believe that an alliance with Austria would result in one between Russia and France." ⁴¹

The Emperor William I was also hostile to an Austro-German alliance. At the time Bismarck and Andrassy were at Gostin, the Kaiser went to Alexandrovsk to stress to the Czar that Germany's position had been misrepresented. When he heard of the Bismarck-Andrassy meeting he wrote:

Germany and Austria are desirous of attaining the same end-- security against unprovoked attacks by foreign forces. But owing to the special mention of Russia as the foe, I cannot agree to the present proposals...after again extending the hand in friendship to the Emperor Alexander after the removal of understanding...Am I to conclude an alliance against him?...I cannot be guilty of such an act of disloyalty. ⁴²

Bismarck gave evidence of his choice of Austria over Russia in 1876, and his feelings that Russia would not be his most natural ally when he stated: "For His Majesty, the attitude recently adopted by the Emperor Alexander, has for the first time illuminated, as with a lightning flash, a situation, which I have been repeatedly obliged to recognize during the past few years." ⁴³

For a time it appeared as though the proposed treaty would go for naught. The Chancellor threatened to resign if it was not accepted and the Emperor threatened to abdicate. ⁴⁴ Bismarck was able to prevail when he referred the

⁴¹ As quoted in: Chrystal, The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 253.

⁴² Busch, Bismarck. p. 483. Letter from Emperor William I to Bismarck, Baden Baden, October 2, 1879.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 227. Prince Bismarck to Count Andrassy, September 3, 1879.

⁴⁴ Chrystal, Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 252.

question to the German Cabinet:

In order to secure the Emperor's approval for the treaty which I had concluded with Andrassy...I was compelled to bring the cabinet into play, a method of procedure extremely against my grain. I succeeded, however, in gaining approval of my colleagues...Count Stolberg was sent to Baden Baden to negotiate with the Emperor. The Emperor was not convinced by the argument of the policy, but gave the promise to ratify the treaty only because he was averse to ministerial changes. ⁴⁵

Count Andrassy was definitely for the treaty. In the words of Prince Hohenlohe, "When he first heard of it he jumped right up to the ceiling for joy." ⁴⁶ Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria had also thrilled to the news of the treaty. Bismarck went to Vienna to secure the old Emperor's approval on the treaty. When he arrived and requested an audience, Bismarck said Franz Joseph, "came especially on my account to Vienna from his shooting box, adopted all of my ideas, and was prepared to do everything I proposed in the interest of peace." ⁴⁷

The major provisions of the treaty, called the Dual Alliance, were defensive in nature. If either Germany or Austria-Hungary were attacked by Russia, or by another power supported by Russia, the other would come to its aid. In the event of an attack by another power (such as an Italian attack on Austria or a French attack on Germany) the other contracting power would at least remain neutral. ⁴⁸

The Austro-German alliance once again ended the threat of German

⁴⁵ Butler, Bismarck. p. 271.

⁴⁶ As quoted in: Chrystal, Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe. p. 252.

⁴⁷ Busch, Bismarck. p. 224.

⁴⁸ Mowat, The Concert of Europe. p. 72.

isolation on the continent of Europe. The Russian threats after the Congress of Berlin had forced Bismarck to make the decision to side with Austria. This alliance, concluded August 28, 1879 and signed by the two contracting powers October 7, 1879, remained the cornerstone of both German and Austrian policy until World War I. ⁴⁹

Russia now found herself alone and isolated and from her experience in the Crimean War, this was a fatal condition. The leading members of the Russian government initiated a series of meetings in which they reviewed the entire diplomatic scene. The conclusion reached was that the threat from Britain overshadowed all other considerations. Great Britain was firmly entrenched in Egypt and Cyprus, therefore, if the Ottoman Empire should crumble rapidly, Britain was in an excellent position to seize strategic areas of Russian interest. ⁵⁰

Since the Congress of Berlin, leadership of Russian policy had changed. Gorchakov, due to age and ill health played no part in Russian foreign policy. The direction of foreign policy was influenced most by N. K. Giers, D. A. Miliutin, Minister of War and P. S. Saburov, Russian Minister at Berlin. The duties as Foreign Minister fell into the hands of N. K. Giers. Although he did not assume the title of office until 1882, he had functioned as Foreign Minister after 1878.

A career diplomat, he had served in posts within the Ottoman Empire, in Moldavia, Wallachia, Constantinople, and Egypt, and later in Paris

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 72.

⁵⁰ Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 19.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 17.

Switzerland and Sweden. In 1875 he was brought back to St. Petersburg as assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and as Director of the Asiatic Department. He realized that an adventurous policy was impossible for a militarily weak and economically unstable country. Security in Europe and at the Straits became the cornerstone of his policy. ⁵²

Russia's interest could best be served with an alliance with Germany. A treaty with Germany could close the major loopholes in the Russian defenses and allow the nation a period of peace in which to repair the damage of the late war and to deal with the pressing problems of internal reform. A hostile coalition against Russia could be prevented and support for Russia in the Straits policy could all be realized by an approach to Germany. ⁵³ Therefore, on February 5, 1880 de Saburov opened negotiations with Bismarck over the possibility of a renewal of the Dreikaiserbund. ⁵⁴

To Bismarck this was a fulfillment of his policy. Immediately after concluding the Dual Alliance he had said, "The dangers to our union with Austria can be minimized by keeping the strictest possible faith with Austria, and at the same time taking care that the road from Berlin to St. Petersburg is not closed." ⁵⁵

Again he gave evidence that this is what he hoped for when he said:

In deciding between the Russian and the Austrian alliance I gave preference to the latter, it was not that I was in any degree blind to the perplexities which made the choice difficult. I regarded it

⁵² Ibid., p. 17.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵⁴ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 108. Memorandum by Prince Bismarck February 6, 1880.

⁵⁵ Butler, Bismarck. p. 275.

as no less enjoined upon us to cultivate neighborly relations with Russia after, than before our defensive alliance with Austria. 56

Bismarck was ready to conclude the agreement with Russia at once but he ran into unexpected opposition from Baron de Haymerle of Austria. He had succeeded Count Andrassy October 8, 1879, shortly after the conclusion of the Dual Alliance. 57 Haymerle desired an alliance with England rather than with Russia. He feared that an agreement with Russia would result in the enmity of Britain and the end of Anglo-Austrian cooperation in the Balkans. At first he strongly resisted the proposals for the reestablishment of the Dreikaiserbund. 58 Bismarck used two arguments to persuade Haymerle. One was that an alliance with Russia would prevent a Franco-Russian agreement against Germany, or an Italo-Russian move against the Dual Monarchy. Secondly, Russia would not be able to alter the status quo in the Balkans without the consent of the two German states. These arguments plus the replacement of Disraeli's government with that of Austrophobe Gladstone, forced Haymerle to the alliance. 59

Finally on June 18, 1881 the Dreikaiserbund was revived but it differed from the old alliance of 1872. It had been formed only to strengthen an understanding of the monarchial governments in the interests of political and social order. The new alliance went much further and embodied provisions of a pro-Russian-Austrian nature.

56 Ibid., p. 275.

57 Ibid., p. 264.

58 Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 23.

59 Ibid., p. 24.

On the question of the Straits, the agreement reached was decidedly against England.⁶⁰ The three Empires agreed that in the event of England's taking action on the Eastern Question further than may coincide with the interests of the powers, and in particular if the British fleet should make any motion towards passing the Dardanelles, Germany, Austria and Russia should agree to prevent this intention by a joint declaration.⁶¹ A second major provision of this alliance was that Germany would be guaranteed Russian neutrality in case of a Franco-German war. Austria Hungary received the assurance that, in the event of a renewed Russo-Turkish war Russia would not make changes in the status quo without consulting her allies. Two major alterations in the Treaty of Berlin were also made. Austria received recognition of her right to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina when she deemed annexation opportune. Russia obtained Austrian agreement to the union of the two Bulgarias, but only if action took place by force of circumstance.⁶²

After the agreement had been completed between the three Emperors, Bismarck had the opportunity presented to himself to further strengthen his system of alliances and further guarantee peace. On January 31, 1882, the Italian Ambassador, Count Launay, approached Bismarck that his government desired to associate itself with German-Austrian policy and added that the King of Italy and his ministers were fully agreed to this point.⁶³ Bismarck

⁶⁰ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 107.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 107. Memorandum by Prince Hohenlohe, Interim Head of the Foreign Office, August 4, 1880.

⁶² Jelavich, Tsarist Russia. p. 25.

⁶³ Dugdale, German Documents. p. 110. Memorandum by Prince Bismarck, January 31, 1882.

first told Count Lanuay that there were no questions at issue or likely to arise between Italy and Germany, their frontiers were far apart, and their foreign policies likewise did not touch each other. But the interests of Austria and Italy--in the Balkans and in the Adriatic, and in the terre irredente--were in frequent contact and collision; and Germany was bound in duty to protect Austria. Here was an opportunity to ease the dangerous Austro-Italian question. This could set aside the elements of Italian-Irredentism--the aspirations after Trent and Trieste.⁶⁴ Bismarck was aware of the consequences of an Italo-Austrian war at the same time Germany would be at war with some other power. Most of Austria's strength would be sapped away from the area where they could help Germany. As Emperor William I said: "In dealing with Italy we should not ignore these memories and should retain her friendship, for 130,000 extra Austrians at Königgrätz might easily have turned the scale on us."⁶⁵

In Vienna on May 20, 1882 the Dual Alliance became the Triple Alliance. The preamble of the Treaty stated that the intention of the act was to increase the guarantees of a general peace, to fortify the monarchical principle, and thereby to assure the unimpaired maintenance of the social and political order in the respective states.⁶⁶

By Article I of the treaty the contracting parties mutually promised peace and friendship, and engaged themselves to enter into no alliance or engagement directed against any one of the states. Perhaps the most

⁶⁴ Mowat, The Concert of Europe. p. 72.

⁶⁵ Bugdale, German Documents. p. 111. Note by the Emperor.

⁶⁶ Mowat, The Concert of Europe. p. 77.

significant part of the treaty was that if Italy were attacked by France, Germany and Austria were bound to come to her assistance with all their forces. If any of the contracting parties were attacked all the contracting parties must aid with all their forces. ⁶⁷

As the year 1882 came to a close Germany was protected by three alliances, the Dual Alliance, the Dreikaiserbund and the Triple Alliance. These treaties were examples of Bismarckian Diplomacy. They had been built by the Iron Chancellor to guarantee peace--not to the world or for humanitarian reasons but because Imperial Germany needed peace.

Bismarck could regard the situation in Europe as favorable to Germany. The basic tool by which he hoped to isolate France, the Dreikaiserbund, had weathered the storm that climaxed in the Congress of Berlin, June 13 until July 13, 1878. Austria, Russia and Germany had once again agreed to cooperate in matters that effected their interests. On top of this, Germany had gained further security through the formation of the Triple Alliance which brought Italy into the system of alliances. As a result, for the time being, Germany would no longer have to worry about Austria becoming involved in a dispute with Italy, nor France heading a coalition hostile to Germany.

At this time, the Bismarckian system of Alliances reached its brightest moment. Germany was connected by alliances and agreements, directly or indirectly with Austria-Hungary, Russia, Serbia, Roumania, Spain, Italy and England. ⁶⁸ Certainly, Bismarck could enjoy a feeling of security.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 77.

⁶⁸ Leonard William Langer, The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), p. 6.

However, Bismarck was not an optimist. He realized the complexity of the alliance system he had helped to create and the problems involved in maintaining the status quo. This statement made by Bismarck in his memoirs added evidence to this fact: "In the future not only military equipment but also a correct political eye will be required to guide the German ship of state through the current of coalitions to which we are exposed in consequence to our geographical position and our previous history."⁶⁹

In Bismarck's mind, the future of Germany could rest only upon remaining strong militarily, and through international alliances in which Germany would play the dominant role. As long as a statesman of Bismarck's stature headed the German state, this system of alliances could be maintained. But, if the leadership of the German nation ever would fall into the hands of lesser individuals, Germany might find the system of alliances hard to maintain and could fall victim to a hostile coalition.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

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BISMARCK -- THE DISHONEST BROKER?

by

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With the convening of the Congress of Berlin June 13, 1878, Otto von Bismarck reached the pinnacle of his diplomatic career. The Iron Chancellor of Germany presided over a meeting of the leading statesmen of Europe who met to decide the fate of the Treaty of San Stefano signed between Russia and Turkey; but bitterly contested by England and Austria.

Prince Bismarck announced that he would serve as the "Honest Broker", and guide the powers through the Congress of Berlin. He would merely be an umpire between England, Austria and Russia. As head of a nation who had no interests in the East, his role would be one of disinterest and aloofness.

But was this his true role at the Congress? Did he actually preside as the disinterested President, and was he as aloof in the negotiations preceding the Congress as he pretended to be? Was he the "Honest Broker" who got the job done? The purpose of this study was to find answers to these questions and to determine Prince Bismarck's true role in the negotiations preceding the Congress and in the meeting itself.

The conclusion drawn was that Bismarck was not the disinterested broker expecting nothing out of the Congress. He believed he must participate in order to best protect the interests of Germany because he was firmly convinced that German security was at stake. The gains Russia had made in the Balkans and the international reaction to the Treaty of San Stefano presented Germany with a two fold threat. One, the peace of Europe was endangered and two, the security of Austria was threatened. Both of these principles were keys to Bismarckian foreign policy.

In order to end this threat to German security, the gains Russia had made by the Treaty of San Stefano had to be set aside. Therefore, in the

negotiations preceding the Congress, and in the actual meeting of the powers, Bismarck schemingly and systematically worked to the disadvantage of Russia. As a result, Otto von Bismarck, the honest broker of the Congress of Berlin must be described as being slightly dishonest.

